

Motivation and Psychological Need Salience in the Experiences of Initiating and
Maintaining Exercise as an Older Female Adult

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Applied Health Sciences
(Health & Physical Education)

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Abstract

Objectives: The primary objective of this study was to explore motivation and psychological need salience in the initiatory and maintenance experiences of older female exercisers.

Methods: Female initiates ($n = 3$) and reflective maintainers ($n = 3$) 65 years of age or older ($M = 76$ years; $SD = 5.37$) participated in semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed holistically and categorically, following a hermeneutic approach to inquiry.

Results: Perceived importance of exercise benefits appeared to be the strongest motive for initiates at this stage of life and connections to others were perceived as valued, but less important in exercise contexts. Also, listening to one's body over instructions from the exercise leader emerged as a key factor to success.

Conclusions: Overall, the results of this study implicate more self-determined than controlled motives as sources of regulation in older females' exercise initiation experiences. Evidence for psychological needs was more heterogeneous and less conclusive.

Acknowledgements

“It was the best of time, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair” (Dickens, 1859, p.1) This is how my favourite author opens one of his most memorable stories and, coincidentally, summarizes the memorable experiences I have had as a Master’s student. As such, I would like to thank all of those who have helped me conquer the periods of Darkness and celebrate in the times of Light.

Firstly, thank you to my friends (labmates included) and family. Your support and understanding during periods of heavy workloads, important deadlines, and ultimate burn-out will not be forgotten.

Secondly, thank you to my committee members, Drs. Enrique Garcia Bengoechea, Jae Pattersen, and Nick Holt (external). Your inquisitiveness, guidance, and diverse expertise have helped me go through this process with a more well-rounded approach to learning.

Finally, but most importantly, the biggest thank you goes to my advisor, Dr. Philip M. Wilson. During my “winter of despair” a wise man once told me that you would be a “champion” for me. I didn’t doubt that sentiment for one minute and am delighted to see such a declaration come to full fruition. My entire Master’s experience has been an arduous uphill battle; there is no way I would have pulled through so successfully without your support, tolerance, and faith in our “team”.

DATE: January 22, 2008

FROM: Michelle McGinn, Chair
Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Philip Wilson, Physical Education & Kinesiology
Meghan Leblanc

FILE: 07-186 WILSON

TITLE: Motivation and Psychological Need Salience in Older Female Exercise Initiates

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above research proposal.

DECISION: Accepted as is (with notes)

Please Note:

- Both recruitment scripts should inform prospective participants about the duration of the interview.
- Please modify the sales staff script and permission to contact form to let prospective participants know that signing does not mean they are necessarily agreeing to participate in the research study. Signing indicates that people are interested in obtaining more information about the study.

This project has received ethics clearance for the period of January 22, 2008 to August 15, 2008 subject to full REB ratification at the Research Ethics Board's next scheduled meeting. The clearance period may be extended upon request. ***The study may now proceed.***

Please note that the Research Ethics Board (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and cleared by the REB. During the course of research no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol, recruitment, or consent form may be initiated without prior written clearance from the REB. The Board must provide clearance for any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to <http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/forms> to complete the appropriate form Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

At this point in history, one cohort that is of particular relevance and importance to be studied in Canada and other countries that were affected by the Second World War is that of the older adults. Not because older adults have suddenly become a more intriguing cohort, but because the baby boom generation (which includes persons born between 1945 and 1965) is now entering this stage of life and is expected to account for almost half of the overall population growth rate over the next four decades (Health Canada, 2002). Globally, it is estimated that the world-wide population of individuals over the age of 60 will reach 1.2 billion by the year 2025, doubling the figure presented in the year 2000 (World Health Organization [WHO], 2007). This trend is also visible in publications by Canada's Healthy Ageing and Wellness Working Group (Canada, 2006). Gender differences do exist in the composition of the baby boomer cohort, with women outliving men in Canada (WHO, 2007). This gender disparity reaches 2:1 with advanced old age (WHO, 2007). Canadian data show that for every male over the age of 80 years, there are 1.8 females within the same age cohort (Statistics Canada, 2006a).

Accompanied by increased life expectancy (Health Canada, 2002; WHO, 2006) and declining birthrates (Health Canada, 2002; Pan American Health Organization, 2006), these trends have implications for the delivery and operation of health care systems, not only in Canada, but around the world (Canada, 2006; Lee, Ko & Lee, 2006; Llewellyn, Balandin, Dew, & McConnell, 2004).

Older Adults

Statistics Canada (2006b) and Health Canada (2002) have classified older adults/seniors as being individuals who are 65 years of age or older. Though a standardized criterion age characterizing older adults is not evident in research (Buijs, Ross-Kerr, O'Brien Cousins & Wilson, 2003; Chogahara, O'Brien Cousins & Wankel, 1998; Costanzo, Walker, Yates, McCabe & Berg, 2006), many studies have used 65 years of age to demarcate older adults/seniors from younger cohorts (Clark, et al., 2005; Gregg, Cauley, Seeley, Ensrud & Bauer, 1998; Gretebeck, et al., 2007; Hughes, et al., 2005; Kostka & Bogus, 2007; Lampinen, Heikkinen, Kauppinen & Heikkinen, 2006; Lee, Ko & Lee, 2006; Leveille, et al., 2002; Ruppar & Schneider, 2007; Sachs-Ericsson, Schatschneider & Blazer, 2006; Simons & Andel, 2006).

Older adults have become an integral part of modern society. Beliefs from recent eras characterized the elderly as being “obsolete human beings dangling hopelessly at the end of the life cycle” (Kahana, Kahana & Zhang, 2006, p.444). In today's society, older adults are seen as functional members of society who provide informal care-giving to their families, contributing to communities through volunteer work, and members of the workforce who continue their vocational pursuits after retirement (Rowe & Kahn, 1997; World Health Assembly, 2005).

It should be noted that the terms *senior* and *older adult* are both used in the extant research literature to refer to the elderly segment of a society (Clark, et al., 2005; Gregg, Cauley, Seeley, Ensrud & Bauer, 1998; Gretebeck, et al., 2007; Hughes, et al., 2005; Kostka & Bogus, 2007; Lampinen, Heikkinen, Kauppinen & Heikkinen, 2006; Lee, Ko & Lee, 2006; Leveille, et al., 2002; Ruppar & Schneider, 2007; Sachs-Ericsson,

Schatschneider & Blazer, 2006; Simons & Andel, 2006). In an effort to remain consistent with the studies cited in this document, both terms will be present.

Successful Aging and Older Adult Health

Though the absence of disease is considered to be an important aspect of health and well-being, health is no longer simply defined as an absence of disease or infirmity (Hahn, Payne, Gallant & Crawford, 2003). Rather, based on the Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986), health is comprised of physical, mental, and social well-being achieved through the realization of aspirations, the satisfaction of needs, and the ability to successfully change or cope with the environment. Complementing this notion of health, ‘successful aging’ is defined as “one’s perception of a favorable outcome in adapting to the cumulative physiologic and functional alterations associated with the passage of time, while experiencing spiritual connectedness, a sense of meaning and purpose in life” (Flood & Scharer, 2002, p.941). Thus, it has been proposed by Rowe and Kahn (1997) that successful, healthy, aging has three components: (1) low probability of disease (and associated risk factors) and disabilities related to disease, (2) high physical and cognitive functional capacities, and (3) being actively, and autonomously, engaged in life through interpersonal relations and meaningful activities in society.

Just as the definition of health has changed over time, the ideas around what constitutes the ‘normal’ process of aging have been called into question. Health changes such as increased blood pressure, blood glucose, and mild memory impairments are no longer considered ‘normal’ processes of aging alone (Rowe & Kahn, 1997). Rather, according to Rowe and Kahn (1997), many of these characteristics are a function of lifestyle choices, often found to be more prevalent with age, but not caused by the aging

process itself. Furthermore, they suggest that with advancing age, environmental factors take on more importance than genetic factors in predicting health status and disease risk. Others suggest that healthy aging is also “a function of successful problem solving” (Beckingham & Watt, 1995, p.481) which capitalizes on one’s own strengths, as well as, the strengths of the environment, and on their ability to sustain themselves in their chosen environment. Collectively, it would appear that successful aging can best be conceptualized as a holistic process of successful adaptation to, or prevention of, physical, psychological, and social changes over time (Beckingham & Watt, 1995; Rowe & Khan, 1997). Maintaining health is one component of this process.

According to a Health Canada (2002) report, Canadians are generally thought to be living in relatively good health in their later years, with perceived good health being reported by eight of ten seniors aged 65 to 74 years old and seven of ten seniors aged 85 years or older. These numbers should be interpreted carefully, however, as they only pertain to older adults who were still living in their own homes at the time of data collection, thus excluding the segment of this population that is likely in the worst health, living as dependents or in long term care facilities. Despite such optimistic results, one in four seniors report facing physical restrictions due to chronic health problems and this phenomenon was observed to increase with age (Health Canada, 2002). Heart disease and cancer were described as being the leading causes of death amongst Canadian seniors, while the leading chronic health conditions (in order of greatest prevalence) were arthritis, high blood pressure, allergies, back problems, heart problems, cataracts, and diabetes (Health Canada, 2002).

Obesity, which is related to increased morbidity, disability and mortality when in combination with other related conditions such as hypertension and diabetes (Oldridge, Stump, Nothwehr & Clark, 2001), is becoming more prevalent in older adult populations (Jensen & Rogers, 1998; Tjepkema, 2005). Over the past 26 years, obesity rates have increased in the older adult population from 20%-25% in the 65-75 years age group and from 11%-24% in those 75 years of age or older (Tjepkema, 2005). A similar trend is apparent in the United States with rates of obesity having increased from 11%-21% since the early 1990's (Mokdad, et al., 1999). In other parts of the world, the consequences of obesity have been illustrated (Kostka & Bogus, 2007), with mobility problems, pain, anxiety, and depression found to be more prevalent in overweight/obese groups of Polish older adults. Kostka and Bogus (2007) concluded that the health related quality of life of community-dwelling older adults is affected by the independent contributions of low levels of physical activity and excess amounts of body fat, advocating the important role of physical activity in the maintenance of health in older age.

Injuries are another concern for older adults, especially those that are related to falls (Blyth, Cumming, Mitchell & Wang, 2007), as they may limit one's functional ability (Yardley, 2003) and cost the Canadian health care system an estimated \$1 billion/year (Health Canada, 2002). The likelihood of being hospitalized increases with advanced age and length of stay in hospital is higher for older adults, with senior women typically requiring longer stays than senior men (Health Canada, 2002). Previous estimates indicate that one in three adults aged over 65 years fall yearly (Tinetti, 1997), and that this prevalence becomes greater with increased age (Blyth, et al., 2007). Falls are thought to contribute to a reduction in one's functional independence and identity

(Yardley & Smith, 2002), an increase in negative affect and lower levels of perceived self-control and optimism (Ruthig, Chipperfield, Newall, Perry & Hall, 2007). The fear of falling itself is said to be linked to lower levels of engagement in physical activity (Resnick, 2001; Tinetti, 1997) and avoidance of activities in general (Fletcher & Hirdes, 2004), particularly when social support is lacking (Howland, et al., 1998). Also, older adults who have higher levels of anxiety are more likely to perceive themselves as functionally limited and avoid activity, even when performance-based indicators would suggest that they are physically capable (Mehta, et al., 2007). This type of avoidance behaviour is troublesome given that exercise, one form of physical activity, is actually associated with a decreased risk of fall-related fractures (Dargent-Molina, et al., 1996) and is shown to improve mobility problems such as muscle weakness and gait impairment in older individuals with chronic illness (Hass, Collins & Juncos, 2007; Plummer, et al., 2007). Both muscular weakness and gait impairment are considered to be risk factors for falls (Tinetti, Speechley & Ginter, 1988).

Older Female Adult Health and Aging

In developed nations such as Canada, women typically live six to eight years longer than their male counterparts, but are expected to deal with functional limitations during more years of their life than men (WHO, 2000). It is commonly reported that older females are more likely to suffer from depression than males (Katona & Shankar, 2004; Kostka & Bogus, 2007), and that rates of depression increase with age. Older women are also more likely to report suffering from chronic health conditions and are 60% more likely to suffer an injury than senior men (Health Canada, 2002). A study by Blyth et al. (2007) demonstrated that fall-related injuries are more frequently reported by women

than men and that multiple falls occur twice as much in females than males. Work by Leveille et al. (2002) revealed that older women with physical and/or functional disabilities remain at increased risk of experiencing recurrent falls if they suffered from widespread musculoskeletal pain. Given Health Canada's (2002) estimate that only 25%-33% of Canadian senior women's 'extra' years (i.e., years spent alive after the average man passes away) are spent disability free, and that musculoskeletal pain is a contributor to disability in older adult women (Leveille, et al., 2002), this could have potentially serious consequences for the burgeoning older female adult population.

Health Benefits of Physical Activity and Exercise for Older Adults

Healthy lifestyles are associated with improved quality of life in older adulthood (Grant Higgins, 1988; Lee, Ko & Lee, 2006; Mowad, 2004; Riebe, et al., 2005) and physical activity is one component of a healthy lifestyle. Though often used synonymously, the terms *exercise* and *physical activity* are different entities (United States Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 1996). *Exercise* is a specific form of physical activity that is defined as activity that is "planned, structured, repetitive, and purposive in the sense that improvement or maintenance of one or more components of physical fitness is the objective" (Caspersen, Powell, & Christensen, 1985, p. 128), while *physical activity* is an umbrella term that is described as "bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscle that increases energy expenditure above the basal level" (USDHHS, 1996, p.20). With older age, functional ability becomes an important concern as the elements of functional fitness (such as muscular strength, muscular endurance, and cardiovascular endurance) play a key role in

the maintenance of health and independence in older populations (Nakamura et al., 2007).

For older adults, *physical activity* and *exercise* are both associated with physiological benefits such as improved and/or maintained functional performance (Buchner, et al., 1997; Gregg et al., 1998; Kaplan, Strawbridge, Morey, Pieper, & Cornoni-Huntley, 1998; Seeman, et al., 1994; van Heuvelen, Kempen, Ormel, & Rispen, 1998), improved physical strength (Damush & Damush, 1999; King, et al., 2000; Simons & Andel, 2006; Symons, et al., 2005), better balance (Orr, et al., 2006), and increased flexibility (DiBrezza, Shadden, Raybon, & Powers, 2005; King et al., 2000). Such gains improve functional health by enabling the person to continue tasks of daily living (Borchelt & Steinhagen-Thiessen, 1992) and allow the individual to continue being physically active which is linked with likelihood of reduced mortality (Gregg, et al., 2003; Manini, et al., 2006; Morey, Pieper, Crowley, Sullivan, & Puglisi, 2002; Rockwood, et al., 2004), bone fractures (Gregg et al., 1998), coronary artery disease (Thompson, et al., 2003) and diabetes (Grylls, McKenzie, Horwath, & Mann, 2003).

Strength-based exercise programs aid in combating sarcopenia (Macaluso & De Vito, 2004; Roubenoff, 2006), which is the natural loss of lean muscle mass that occurs with age (Roubenoff, 2003). Research suggests that the effects of sarcopenia can be, at least in part, minimized and/or reversed through *physical activity* (Hawkins, Wiswell & Marcell, 2003; Roubenoff, 2006; Walsh, Hunter & Livingstone, 2006). This is of particular importance to older female adults, as sarcopenia holds an indirect relationship to osteoporosis and related fractures in the elderly (Walsh et al., 2006). Other physical benefits of regular *physical activity* for this population are more efficient wound healing

(Emery, Kiecolt-Glaser, Glaser, Malarkey & Frid, 2005), improved sleep (Alessi, Yoon, Schnelle, Al-Samarrai & Cruise, 1999; Singh, et al., 2005;), and reduced body weight (Stewart, et al., 2001).

The benefits of *physical activity* for older adults are not limited to the physiological domain. Previous research reports an array of psychological benefits associated with *physical activity* in older adults, including better self-esteem (McAuley, Blissmer, Katula, Duncan & Mihalko, 2000; McAuley, Evlasky, Motl, Konopack, Hu & Marquez, 2005), reduced depression (De Moor, Beem, Stubbe, Boomsma & De Geus, 2006), less anxiety (De Moor et al., 2006; Watanabe, Okada, Takeshima & Inomata, 2000), as well as, improved mood and life satisfaction (Arent, Landers & Etnier, 2000; Stathi, Fox & McKenna, 2002). Previous studies have documented that social activities (such as *exercise*) have been shown to aid in the reduction of depression and isolation, which are also linked to morbidity and mortality in older adults (Cattan, White, Bond & Learmouth, 2005; Fry & Debats, 2006; Arthur, 2006). Furthermore, *physical activity*, which has the potential to be a source of fun and social interaction (Buijs, Ross-Kerr, O'Brien Cousins & Wilson, 2003), is indeed effective in reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness in advanced age (Cattan et al., 2005; Stathi, Fox, & McKenna, 2002).

Initiates and Adherence to Exercise

Clarity around the defining characteristics of a new exerciser, or initiate exerciser, is not readily apparent in the literature. Studies that have examined this category of exerciser, however, have described their participants in terms of length of time in abstinence of exercise, such that individuals had not been regularly active for a predetermined number of years (1 year; Annesi, 2002a; 2 years; Annesi, 2002b; 0.5 years; Annesi, 2003), had been sedentary during middle age and started exercising in

later life (d'Epinay & Bickel, 2003), or engaged in exercise no more than once per week for the past six months (Milne, Rodgers, Hall, & Wilson, 2008).

Health scientists have become increasingly interested in ways to influence sedentary people to become more physically active (Christensen, Schmidt, Budtz-Jorgensen, & Avlund, 2006), and also how to keep them involved in activity programs after initiation (Fraser & Spink, 2002). According to Buckworth and Dishman (2002), adherence is defined as “conforming faithfully to a standard of behaviour that has been set as a part of a negotiated agreement” (p. 30) and that in terms of *exercise* adherence, researchers generally base rates of adherence on a preset cut point (typically 60%–80%) of attendance. For example, using a cut point of 60% attendance, individuals who attend at least 60% of their expected/available *exercise* sessions would be classified as adherers, while those attending less than 60% of the sessions would be labelled as drop outs. Previous studies show that approximately 50% of new exercisers will drop out of their programs during the first six months after adoption (Buckworth & Dishman, 2002; Dishman 1988) and that overall adherence/attrition statistics are similar regardless of whether the exercise programs are unsupervised or supervised, self-initiated or prescribed (Dishman, 1988). This phenomenon has remained stable for over a quarter of a century (Buckworth & Dishman, 2002) and seems applicable to older adults. For example, Morey et al. (2002) reported that 52% of older adults who discontinued exercising did so within the first 3 months post-intervention, and Annesi and Unruh (2007) reported drop out rates over a 6 month period ranging from 49%-69% for those who did not receive an exercise coach treatment and 9%-54% for those who did in an older adult cohort.

Physical Activity Levels of Older Adults

The current *physical activity* guidelines set out by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC; 2003) suggest that older adults should be trying to accumulate 30-60 minutes of moderate intensity *physical activity* per day. Intensity levels can be classified in a variety of ways. As such, moderate intensity *physical activity* is described as activity that (a) is equal to a MET (metabolic equivalent) score of 3.0 – 6.0, (b) requires 50–70% of one's maximal heart rate, (c) brings a person to a perceived rating of exertion between 12 – 14 on the Borg scale, and/or (d) allows a person to carry on a conversation with a partner (United States Centre for Disease Control & Prevention [USCDCP], 2007). The PHAC (2003) guidelines also emphasize the importance of being involved in a variety of activities that target different forms of fitness (e.g., cardiovascular, strength, and flexibility). While these recommendations are based on achieving general health benefits, a number of studies have implied that alternative exercise recommendations may be required for more specific health goals such as functional fitness. For example, Nakamura et al. (2007) reported that overall improvements in strength, power, flexibility and cardiovascular endurance were only seen in a group of older females that engaged in *exercise* three times/ week. The results of other studies further support the contention that exercise is needed more than once or twice a week in order to see meaningful improvements in functional fitness amongst older adults (Puggaard, 2003; Stiggelbout, Popkema, Hopman-Rock, de Greef & van Mechelen, 2004).

While functional disability is a concern for older adults, epidemiological studies show that the majority of older adults in developed nations are not achieving the recommended amounts of *physical activity* needed to acquire health benefits

(Christensen, Schmidt, Budtz-Jorgensen & Avlund, 2006; Eyster, Brownson, Bacak, & Housemann, 2003; Ory, Jordan & Bazzarre, 2002; Rockwood et al., 2004). In Canada, for example, 57% of adults over the age of 65 were classified as being inactive, with the remaining 25% and 18% being categorized as moderately active and active (Statistics Canada, 2007). This observation parallels recent American data which claims that only 6% of the older adults took advantage of the exercise facilities and their programs (Hughes et al., 2005). Though not all available facilities chose to participate in this study and not all active seniors choose to engage in seniors programs, Hughes et al. (2005) speculate that this is still likely to overestimate prevalence given that many attendees would likely be participating in more than one program.

One question stemming from this research concerns why older adults are not being adequately physically active. Barriers, such as a lack of time, poor weather, and negative self-talk offer some possible explanations for refraining from various forms of *physical activity* (Kowal & Fortier, 2007; O'Brien Cousins & Gillis, 2005), while a lack of social support, concern for safety, health problems, and perceptions of *exercise* being unpleasant may be others (Schuster, Petosa & Petosa, 1995; O'Brien Cousins & Gillis, 2005). As an older adult's prior and current beliefs about, and interpretations of, *exercise* are highly influential on behaviour (Ruppar & Schneider, 2007), it has been suggested that future research should examine how to help an individual connect their perceptions to their exercise program in order to improve activity levels (Ruppar & Schneider, 2007).

Older Female Adults and Exercise

Gender differences do exist with regards to physical activity levels (Gilmour, 2007). In general, women report less physically active leisure time than men and men are

more likely to report being at least moderately active during their leisure time. This is particularly true for younger (less than 34) and older (65 or older) cohorts (Gilmour, 2007). Also in comparison to men, older adult women report greater levels of concentration, more alert thinking, and have a greater enjoyment of music during *exercise* (Ruppar & Schneider, 2007). In this same study, older women also tended to appreciate the value of stretching activities more than their male counterparts, but placed less value on the sensations of straining and sweating, and indicated more social support for exercise.

In other work examining social support in *exercise*, older female adults with stronger social networks walk more frequently than those with weaker social networks (Walsh, Pressman, Cauley, & Browner, 2001). Also, for middle aged, sedentary women, a sizeable amount of variance in program adherence has been found to be accounted for by esteem support from within an exercise program itself (Duncan, Duncan, & McAuley, 1993).

Reinforcing the importance of adherence to *exercise* in older age and the notion that physical function declines are related more to lifestyle than the aging process, Rikli and Busch (1986) demonstrated that older adult women who remain committed to their *physical activity* regimen have the potential to maintain performance levels similar to younger women in flexibility, balance, and reaction time. Walsh, Pressman, Cauley, and Browner (2001) also found that past behaviour (particularly at age 50 years) was associated with walking and medium-to-high intensity activity when over 65 years of age. With the findings of Rikli and Busch (1986) in mind, these results suggest that

women who are active at 50 years of age are more likely to be active after 65 and maintain performance levels similar to those of their younger counterparts.

Role of Theory

The goals of most health behaviour research are to generate new knowledge and understand the determinants of health and behaviour change processes which ultimately will improve the health of individuals, communities and populations at large (Noar & Zimmerman, 2005). Theory testing and implementation is generally considered a valuable tool in such processes (Noar & Zimmerman, 2005). As described by Seeley (1974), theory itself is a “proposal to a particular struggle or set of struggles” (p. 162) which, ideally, brings clarity to matters at hand instead of confusion. Theory provides a basis from which techniques and interventions can be developed and refined in order to improve their accuracy and effectiveness in addressing real world concerns (Noar & Zimmerman, 2005; Pemberton, 1992). While advances in science do not require theory based research (Kelly, 2000), the use of theory provides an overarching framework for conceptualization and can help to break down complex phenomena into more manageable units for analysis and exploration (Pemberton, 1992). Stated differently, theory is a simplified view of reality (Mitchell, 1985) which should not be reified (Dunette, 1966) to retain relevance to scientific progress (Forscher, 1963).

Psychological Theory and Older Adult Physical Activity Research

Recent research examining physical activity in older adults have employed the frameworks of Social Cognitive Theory (Christensen et al., 2006; Costanzo, Walker, Yates, McCabe & Berg, 2006; Mayer, et al., 1994), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Gretebeck et al., 2007), the Transtheoretical Model (Clark et al., 2005; Clark, Nigg,

Greene, Riebe & Saunders, 2002; Riebe, et al., 2005), Activity Limitation Theory (Yochim, Kerkar & Lichtenberg, 2006), the Preventive and Corrective Proactivity Model of Successful Aging (Kahana, Kahana, & Zhang, 2005) and the Self-Regulation of Exercise Maintenance Model (Ruppar & Schneider, 2007). In brief, the use of these approaches has yielded numerous insights into determinants of older adult physical activity: (a) beneficial effects of behavioural counselling (Costanzo et al., 2006; Mayer et al., 1994); (b) cohesive exercise groups reporting greater efficacy (Christensen et al., 2006); (c) functional ability predicts exercise intention (Gretebeck et al., 2007), as well as, *physical activity* and depression (Yochim, Kerkar, & Lichtenberg, 2006); and (d) the ameliorating effects of proactive thinking on declining adherence across time (Kahana, Kahana, & Zhang, 2005).

Self-Determination Theory

Another theory that may provide complimentary knowledge and broaden the understanding of factors influencing older adult physical activity behaviour is Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2002). SDT is a metatheory that integrates ideas, perspectives, and/or phenomena from a range of humanistic schools of thought (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Deci and Ryan (2002) postulate within SDT that individuals strive to develop a unified sense of self, that well-being is governed in part by the satisfaction of psychological needs, and that people's behaviour is regulated by a continuum of motives that differ in their integration in the self. These concepts are best illustrated through the four mini theories that serve as the foundation of the SDT framework; basic needs theory, organismic integration theory, causality orientations

theory, and cognitive evaluation theory. Basic needs and organismic integration theories are summarized in brief below, as they are most relevant to this investigation.

Basic Needs Theory

Just as the physical self requires nourishment in order to achieve optimal growth and development, so does the psychological self. These “nutriments” (p.229) are what Deci and Ryan (2002) call the basic psychological needs and are considered to be innate, in that theoretically, all humans possess them and when these needs are fulfilled authentically they promote well-being. The three basic psychological needs advocated by Deci and Ryan (2002) within the SDT framework are autonomy, relatedness and competence. *Autonomy* refers to a sense of “being the perceived origin or source of one’s own behaviour” (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p.8) and that one’s behaviours are an expression of the true self. Though often confused with the idea of independence, autonomy is not synonymous with this term, as it is possible for one to volitionally comply with or follow the requests and/or values of another (Deci & Ryan, 2002). For example, autonomous patients are often relieved to sacrifice some decision making to their physicians when undergoing surgery (Williams, 2002). *Relatedness* refers to feeling a meaningful connection to others and a sense of belonging and unity with other individuals and within the community (Deci & Ryan, 2002). It reflects the natural tendency of humans to seek out relationships. *Competence* refers to the confidence in one’s perceived ability to be successful in the face of challenges and experiences that optimize their capacities (Deci & Ryan, 2002). In essence, *competence* is largely concerned with how effective a person believes themselves to be in a given context.

Organismic Integration Theory

Deci and Ryan (2002) stipulate within organismic integration theory (OIT) that a continuum of regulations exist which motivate human behaviour. On one extreme lies intrinsic motivation, meaning that an individual performs a behaviour solely based on its inherent enjoyableness or appeal to one's interests (Deci & Ryan, 2002). For example, in a physical activity context, one may be intrinsically motivated if they participate in exercise because they perceive it to be fun or because it just feels good. On the other end of the continuum lies amotivation, this refers to having no motivation at all to perform a particular behaviour and being, essentially, non-regulated (Deci & Ryan, 2002). An individual would be classified as amotivated for exercise if they expressed having absolutely no interest in the behaviour at all. Between the two ends of the continuum are various forms of extrinsic motivation, or reasons to engage in a behaviour that are external to the behaviour itself (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Though they are all classified as extrinsic, some (identified and integrated regulations) are more internalized and thus more self-determined in nature than others (external and introjected regulations).

The least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation is *external regulation*. This is described as being compelled to engage in a behaviour in order to receive some kind of reward or to avoid punishment (Deci & Ryan, 2002). If an individual participates in exercise because their insurance company will reduce the cost of their plan if they regularly attend a gym facility, they would be considered to be regulated by external reasons. *Introjected regulation* is a partially internalized, but still controlling, form of extrinsic motivation that is characterized by the desire to avoid feelings of guilt and shame, or to reduce ego threats to enhance self-worth (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Performing exercise because one feels they should get in shape, even if they do not want to, is an

example of introjected regulation. *Identified regulation* is more self-determined in nature and relates to an individual placing value in the achievement of a behavioural goal and finding the behaviour itself to be personally important, though not necessarily enjoyable or interesting (Deci & Ryan, 2002). For instance, if an individual wants to lose weight and views exercise as a boring yet important step in achieving their goal, they are likely exercising for identified reasons. *Integrated regulation* is the most self-determined form of extrinsic motivation and reflects motivation from endorsing the values and goals that an individual considers to be integral to their sense of self-identity (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Thus, if someone exercises because being a healthy, active person is a valued part of their identity, they likely do so through *integrated regulation*.

Self-Determination Theory and Health Behaviours

SDT has been used by health researchers in the health field to examine how motivation and psychological need satisfaction play a role in improving health through behaviour change such as smoking cessation (Williams, et al., 2006a), adherence to prescribed medication (Kennedy, Goggin, & Nollen, 2004; Williams, Rodin, Ryan, Grolnick, & Deci, 1998), and improving diet (Pelletier, Dion, Slovenic-D'Angelo, & Reid, 2004; Williams, et al., 2006a; Williams, Grow, Freedman, Ryan & Deci, 1996). Furthermore, the degree to which physicians and other health professionals nurture intrinsic motivation and the internalization of behaviour regulation through need supportive practices has become a popular area of investigation for intervention studies (Williams, 2002). With regards to health behaviours, internalization is described as the process by which people assume responsibility for undertaking the behaviours necessary for improved health (such as taking one's medication, quitting smoking, or reducing fat

intake; Williams, 2002). If the regulation for these behaviors does not become internalized, it is likely that people will abandon their regimen, placing them at increased risk of morbidity and mortality, which not only affects the individual, but also generates increased costs to the health care system (Williams, 2002).

Autonomy support from others is said to be important for “motivating change of various health behaviors” (Williams, et al., 2006a, p.179) and can even be effective in motivating individuals who are not ready to start the process of change (Williams, et al., 2006b; Williams, et al., 2006c). As such, a large portion of the health behaviour research embracing SDT as a guiding framework has focused on the concept of *autonomy support* (Williams, 2002). Past research focusing on autonomy support has shown that when physicians and important others are autonomy supportive, perceived autonomy and competence are enhanced (Williams, et al., 2006b; Williams et al., 2006c) and motivation is internalized (Williams, Gagne, Ryan & Deci, 2002; Williams et al., 2006b; Williams et al., 2006c), leading to positive health behaviours such as prolonged abstinence from smoking (Williams et al., 2002; Williams et al., 2006c), reduced intake of calories from fat (Williams et al., 2006c), adherence to medication prescriptions by HIV patients (Kennedy, Goggin & Nollen, 2004), and improved blood glucose levels in diabetics (Williams, McGregor, King, Nelson & Glasgow, 2005). In summary, people are more likely to adhere to and improve in their health behaviours when their psychological needs are satisfied, promoting more internalized forms of motivation regulation (Williams, 2002). These findings suggest that SDT is a useful theory in designing interventions for health behaviour change.

Self-Determination Theory and Physical Activity/Exercise

Increasing exercise adherence is considered to be possibly “one of the most important and compelling reasons” (Frederick-Recascino, 2002, p. 286) for studying motivation in this context. As such, exercise psychology researchers have been working in parallel with the development of SDT literature in an effort to understand how psychological need satisfaction and motivation affect exercise behaviour and well-being.

With regards to OIT, previous research has shown that more internalized motives, even if extrinsic in origin (especially *identified* regulation), are better predictors of actual and intended behaviour (Biddle, Soos & Chatzisarantis, 1999; Wilson & Rodgers, 2004; Wilson, Rodgers, Fraser & Murray, 2004) and well-being (Thøgersen-Ntoumani & Ntoumanis, 2007) than less internalized motives, and that individuals who are motivated to be active for more self-determined reasons are more likely to participate in exercise more regularly over a week (Frederick & Ryan, 1993). This finding is further substantiated in other studies (Wilson, Blanchard, Nehl & Baker, 2006; Wilson, et al., 2003). It is suggested that more internalized forms of extrinsic regulation are better predictors when the desired behaviour is not considered to be inherently interesting (Vallerand, 2001), much like how exercise may be considered boring to new or non-exercisers. Extrinsic forms of motivation, such as appearance and fitness motives, have been shown to be more prevalent in exercise participants than sport participants in the study by Frederick and Ryan (1993). This is not to suggest, however, that all exercisers foster less internalized forms of regulation for this behavior, as the same study revealed that long-term adherers to exercise programs are typically regulated by more internalized forms of motivation.

In terms of organismic integration and the adoption and maintenance of exercise behaviour, Mullan and Markland (1997) have suggested that extrinsic forms of motivation act as catalysts in the initial stages of exercise behaviour change. This suggestion, however, seems less likely given the findings of Ingledew, Markland, and Medley (1998) which contend that individuals who are taking small steps toward committing to exercise (in the preparation stage) are predominantly guided by *intrinsic* motives. From this same study, which is based on the stages of change presented by Prochaska and DiClemente's (1984) Transtheoretical Model, it is learned that even though *extrinsic* motives seem to overtake *intrinsic* motives during the action stage, it is reversed once in maintenance. It is possible then, that new exercisers are simply overwhelmed with the difficulty and physical exhaustion that is commonly experienced when beginning an exercise program and that when these initial obstacles are overcome, motives of enjoyment and revitalization take over to regulate behaviour.

Connecting OIT with Basic Needs Theory, researchers have also found that perceived *autonomy* support, autonomous motivation, and greater levels of physical activity increased with *autonomy* supportive, SDT-based interventions (Fortier, Sweet, O'Sullivan & Williams, 2007). Conversely, perceived *autonomy* dwindled in exercise programs of a more prescriptive and controlled nature (Wilson, Rodgers, Blanchard & Gessell, 2003). Researchers have also found that perceived *autonomy* support from significant others is associated with more autonomous intentions to be active (Brickell, Chatzisarantis & Pretty, 2006; Hagger, Chatzisarantis, Culverhouse & Biddle, 2003; Wilson & Rodgers, 2004) and that the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness is associated with more self-determined motives for exercise (McDonough &

Crocker, 2007; Vlachopoulos & Michailidou, 2006; Wilson, Mack, Muon & LeBlanc, 2007).

In short, SDT has been shown to be a useful framework for understanding physical activity and more specifically, exercise motivation and behaviour. It should be noted, however, that all of the studies discussed in this section have been conducted with predominantly very young, young and/or middle-aged participants and have all tested this framework using a positivistic approach that relied on statistics as the main data source.

Self-Determination Theory and Older Adults

SDT's orientation toward psychological need satisfaction and motivation may provide complementary and useful knowledge that will aid researchers and interventionists in understanding why older adults engage in exercise behaviour and how to entice those who are not currently active to start. Unfortunately, the extant literature that has applied SDT to older adults is generally limited to non-physical activity settings. For example, previous studies have shown that more self-determined adults experience more negative affect when entering nursing homes than who are less self-determined (Kasser & Ryan, 1999; O'Connor & Vallerand, 1994a). They do, however, seem to adjust better when living in institutions that are more supportive of residents' self-determination (O'Connor & Vallerand, 1994b).

One study that did apply SDT to explore older adults motives in a physical activity context (Wilson, Blanchard, LeBlanc, Nehl & Baker, 2007) found that more self-determined motives were the strongest predictors of exercise behavior frequency, compared to more controlled motives, and that *identified regulation* was the dominant variable predicting the largest proportion of unique variance in exercise behavior.

Together, these findings suggest that distinguishing between the intrinsic or extrinsic orientation of a person's motivation for exercise may be less important than understanding the degree of self-determination that accompanies one's reasons for engaging in physical activity.

Critiques of SDT-Based Research

While the framework proposed by Deci and Ryan (2002) has demonstrated considerable utility and support in the health literature, a number of concerns exist that warrant more sustained empirical attention. Notwithstanding criticism applied to organismic models of human science, a closer inspection of the SDT literature base indicates these areas have received scant attention in general and in applications of the theory to the study of exercise issues. These limitations represent (a) focus on the use of positivism and statistics as a mode of data-driven scientific inquiry, (b) attention to younger age cohorts in applications of SDT to physical activity research, and (c) attention to experiences and motivational processes of populations engaged in exercise with little to no attention focused on the experiences of initiates.

In his reflections on the Third International Self-Determination Theory Conference (Toronto, Canada, 2007), Valery Chirkov noted that of the 350 accepted presentations, only *three* were studies utilizing qualitative or mixed-methods, exemplifying the dominance of statistics-oriented research in the application of SDT to diverse areas of life (V. Chirkov, personal communication, May 31, 2007). Christensen et al (2006) outline how qualitative and quantitative methods can complement one another: Qualitative methods can be used to gain information that helps in the development of new quantitative measures and quantitative methods may generate findings that warrant in

depth qualitative inquisition. While qualitative methods can also aid in the interpretation and explanation of quantitative data, the reverse is also true. This outlook is further supported by Kelly (2000) who claims that “there is no privileged place for either “quantitative” or “qualitative” approaches (at least now that the legitimacy of qualitative research is established).” (p. 77).

With regards to research on the older adult population, Stathi, Fox and McKenna (2002) claim that there is a lack of qualitative data being generated in aging research. Furthermore, O’Brien Cousins and Gillis (2005) state that “as baby boomers enter their mid-50s, and as their parents reach advanced age, scientists know little about what these two age groups are actually doing and thinking about their levels of physical activity” (p. 314). Qualitative methods are one way to gain such insight, particularly when interviews are employed as the means of data collection because it allows the participants to openly express their thoughts on specific topics, perhaps even providing new information, which may otherwise go uncovered by focusing on quantitative methods alone (O’Brien Cousins & Gillis, 2005). Although calls for more qualitative research have been forthcoming in the SDT-literature with respect to physical activity (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2007), it appears that minimal progress has been made.

Researchers in the field of gerontology have declared that there is a dearth of knowledge on older adult physical activity motivation (Dacey & Newcomer, 2005) and others have suggested that “motivation theorists should make more effort in testing their models on older people [because the] basic human needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness become harder to satisfy in this period of life” (Coleman, 2000, p. 293).

While a solitary study has been conducted examining physical activity in older adults

using SDT (Wilson et al., 2007), the focus in this study concerned a limited portion of the SDT-framework. Specifically, the study reported by Wilson et al. (2007) used organismic integration theory to focus on the motivation-physical activity behaviour relationship. Despite the results of this study being informative and somewhat novel, they do little to address Coleman's (2000) concerns given that no assessment of psychological needs or their fulfillment was undertaken. It would appear, then, that there remains considerable scope for exploring the centrality of experiences that contribute to fulfillment of the basic psychological needs advocated by Deci and Ryan (2002) within the context of older adult physical activity experiences.

Previous research on exercise initiates has examined behavioural intentions and mental imagery (Milne et al., 2008), exercise-induced feeling states (Annesi, 2002a; Annesi, 2002b), influence of coaching on drop out rates (Annesi & Unruh, 2007), mortality rates of adherents (Morey et al., 2002), and investigated issues of motivation and adherence from non-SDT frameworks (Annesi, 2002b). Little, however, has been done to test SDT-based constructs in exercise initiates (Wilson, Mack & Grattan, in press) and as such, researchers have put forth the call for SDT-based research in this population (Wilson et al., in press).

Another criticism that has been made of SDT is that it places too much emphasis on the heavily studied, intrapersonal variables of *competence* and *autonomy* and not enough on *relatedness* (Buunk & Nauta, 2000). *Relatedness*, though the most understudied of the SDT-based variables, is still an innate need for all humans across cultures (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Research in the field of physical activity, however, has found mixed results for the relationship between exercise regulation and the

fulfillment of relatedness needs (Wilson et al., 2003), and that may be one reason why research has placed less emphasis on this need. A second possible explanation lies within the structure of the fourth mini-theory, cognitive evaluation theory. Despite there being three needs, it specifies only two cognitive processes: changes in perceived *competence* and changes in perceived locus of causality (a concept that closely aligns with the idea of *autonomy*), leaving *relatedness* overlooked in health behaviour change interventions that are based on this mini theory. Given that “the theory suggests that people will tend to be more autonomous, relative to controlled, when they experience greater fulfillment of the three psychological needs.” (Williams, 2002, p. 235), no psychological need should be left to the wayside. Thus, the reports of mixed support for the relationship between relatedness and exercise regulation lead to a different kind of question; not whether needs vary in importance, but if the synergistic nature of the three needs is important to consider with reference to motivation and well-being.

Relating to such a question, a final criticism of the SDT literature concerns the nature of the relationship between psychological needs and relevant consequences such as motivation and well-being (Sheldon & Niemiec, 2006). While Deci and Ryan (2002) have long extolled the complementary nature of basic needs, recent work by Sheldon and Niemiec has examined the extent to which an optimal balance in need fulfillment is important to well-being. Prior studies examining psychological need satisfaction have emphasized the degree of satisfaction (Sheldon & Niemiec, 2008), or in other words, the more satisfied each psychological need is, the better. If, however, there are large discrepancies between the levels of each psychological need’s satisfaction, hypothetically there could be an imbalance which may be potentially disadvantageous. Findings from

Sheldon and Niemiec's work suggest that individuals with more balanced need satisfaction typically had higher levels of well-being in comparison to those whose need satisfaction was more varied. So why then, in exercise contexts, does *relatedness* not seem to play as instrumental of a role as *competence* and *autonomy*?

Despite the novel and insightful nature of the investigation reported by Sheldon and Niemiec (2006), few studies to date have examined the nature of need balance within the SDT framework. One recent study undertaking such a task in sport implicated measurement concerns with the notion of aggregating members to provide a composite need balance score (Perreault, Gaudreau, Lapointe & Lacroix, 2007). Extrapolating from Perreault et al. (2007), it seems reasonable to suggest that further investigation of the balanced approach to need fulfillment could benefit from more open-ended qualitative approaches at this stage of the literature's development.

Chapter 2 – Purpose and Research Questions

Purpose and Significance

The main purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of older female adult initiate and maintaining exercisers through the lens of SDT. In addressing this purpose, this study also sought to expand the SDT literature through the use of methods not commonly employed within the literature using this theory (V. Chirkov, personal communication, May 31, 2007) to understand motivation in physical activity settings. As such, a qualitative exploration of need satisfaction and motivation in both global and exercise contexts was conducted.

Research Questions and Sub-Questions

This study was guided by three primary questions. First, what reasons guide/regulate exercise behaviour in older initiate females? Second, what role does the fulfillment of psychological needs amongst initiate females play in exercise and broader contexts? Finally, what role does exercise play in older females' life during the early steps to initiation?

Chapter 3 – Design and Methods

Ontology, Epistemology, and Methodology

Ontology refers to the ways in which people view the nature of reality/being/existence (Willis, 2007). This study was based on the ontological position of participative reality, such that the investigator believes that the nature of reality is both a subjective construction of the mind and an external material entity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). *Epistemology* is the “way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). Lying between postpositivist objectivism and interpretivist subjectivism is the approach of reality-oriented qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002). This approach adopts a dualist stance with regards to the manner in which knowledge is acquired. In effect, the phenomena under study are investigated through qualitative methods as a way of “reality testing that uses evidence to examine assertions and corroborate claims” (Patton, 2002, p.91) from mainstream science and as such, was the epistemological stance guiding this study. The *methods* or “strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3) guiding this study was couched in a contemporary version of *hermeneutics* called validation hermeneutics. In general, hermeneutical researchers attempt to understand phenomena through language and context (Willis, 2007). *Validation hermeneutics*, specifically, are founded on postpositivist thought, meaning that followers of this version of the hermeneutic movement try to find truth by understanding a topic within a specific context (Willis, 2007).

Site, Population, and Recruitment

Participant recruitment and data collection were conducted at a YMCA in the Niagara Region of South Western Ontario, Canada. Given that 83.3% of Canadian seniors live in four Canadian provinces (Health Canada, 2002) and Ontario is one of those four, the location was ideal for research on this population. The YMCA was chosen as the site because this organization is founded on community outreach and providing affordable programs for people of all socio-economic statuses, and thus recruiting from this institution should reduce the chances of excluding individuals of lesser financial means.

All interviews were conducted at the YMCA, rather than at the university, for two reasons. First, interviewing at the YMCA increased convenience for the participants and reduced transportation barriers which are commonly reported by older adults as reasons for dropping out of studies (Baker et al., 2007). Second, conducting the interviews in the environment where the participants exercise is consistent with the methodological foundations of the project and may have helped to stimulate thoughts, which in turn may have helped to generate richer data. Evidence of successful interviewing of older adults in the physical activity environment is present in the literature (Stathi, et al., 2002).

Given the lack of clarity from the literature in defining initiate exercisers (Milne et al., 2008), for the purposes of this study, participants were classified as *initiates* (IN's) if they met the following description which has been blended from the work of Annesi (2002a; 2002b; 2003) and d'Epinay and Bickel (2003): (a) Had never been engaged in regular formal exercise prior to beginning their current regimen, or (b) Had been engaged in regular formal exercise in the past, but were abstinent for at least one year before or after entering young-old adulthood (65-74 years; Spirduso, Francis & MacRae, 2005),

and (c) in either case, their current exercise regimen had lasted no longer than six months at the time of the interview. The initiates comprised 50% of the sample, while the other 50% were classified as *reflective maintainers* (RM's; this term has been created for the purposes of this study). RM's were older adults regularly engaged in exercise for at least six months prior to this study who were asked to reflect on their previous experiences as initiates.

Participant recruitment used 3 methods: (1) By posters placed on the YMCA's bulletin board; (2) In person by the YMCA staff when signing up for membership (this also involved a group training session of the staff members by the investigator on the purpose of the study, the recruitment process, and ethical considerations); and (3) Announcements delivered by the investigator at the beginning of structured exercise classes, as well as, on the walking track to an "unofficial" older adult exercise class run by the members themselves. All of the participants were ultimately recruited as a function of the in-class announcements.

Incentives for participation included a \$10 grocery store gift card, as well as, light refreshments at the time of the interview. A \$5 incentive was also offered to the staff members for every participant they recruited that completed an interview, however the YMCA administration preferred that the money be donated to their Strong Kids charity foundation, and as such the investigator decided to make this charitable donation an incentive for all participants, not just the staff members.

Participants ($N = 11$) were recruited and interviewed; Only six of the 11 participants were selected for analysis due to (a) the discovery that certain participants did not actually meet the classification criteria of either the IN or RM, or (b) the inability

of some participants to reflect adequately upon their initiate experiences (e.g. If a participant responded often with “I don’t remember. That was a long time ago” and could not provide reflections after being given directional prompts). Participants retained for analysis were six females, each 65 years of age or older ($M = 76$ years; $SD = 5.37$). Interviews, including the completion of questionnaires and ethics forms, lasted between 56 and 109 minutes in length ($M = 85.5$ minutes; $SD = 22.97$). In an attempt to foster quality thick descriptions, longer interviews were employed and thus the number of participants was relatively smaller than other qualitative studies examining older adults and physical activity which had interviews lasting 20-60 minutes ($N = 28$; Stathi, et. al., 2002), 45-60 minutes ($N = 22$; Hendry, Williams, Markland, Wilkinson & Maddison, 2006), or on average 30 minutes ($N = 40$; O’Brien Cousins & Gillis, 2005). Kvale (1996) has also supported the use of small samples within the qualitative research genre claiming: “If the number of subjects is too large, then it is not possible to make penetrating interpretations of the interviews” (p.102).

Data Collection

The interview sessions began with a brief introduction (see Appendix A), followed by the completion of a series of brief questionnaires (see Appendix B) by the participant in order to obtain basic descriptive information on participant characteristics and exercise behaviour. A demographic questionnaire was used to collect information on participant age, height, weight, and length of time in their current exercise program. The Stage of Change for Exercise (SOCE; Mullan & Markland, 1997) instrument was used to determine the stage of exercise behaviour change of each participant. The SOCE is a simple, one-item instrument that asks participants to check the one box (out of five) that

most closely represents their answer to the question “do you participate in exercise?”

Each box is associated with a different stage of exercise behaviour change. The Barthel Index (BI; Mahoney & Barthel, 1965) was included to assess functional ability. The BI is a 10 item instrument whereby participants respond to each item identifying the number that corresponds with their answer. From these answers a total score out of 100 is generated, with higher scores representing greater functional independence (Mahoney & Barthel). The Older Adult Exercise Status Inventory (OA-ESI; O’Brien Cousins, 1997) was used to measure the physical activity levels of the participants during the week leading up to the interview. The questionnaire is organized into two sections: (a) Work Activities (6 items) and (b) Leisure Activities (55 items). Each item represents a type of physical activity and participants are asked to list the amount of time they spent on each activity per day during the previous week. Scores were calculated by multiplying the total amount of minutes of that activity by the metabolic equivalent (energy expenditure per minute of that activity) to provide the total number of kilocalories expended in that activity that week (O’Brien- Cousins, 1997). Kilocalories for each activity were then added to generate an overall figure that represents weekly physical activity energy expenditure.

The formal interview (see interview guide in Appendix C) was conducted immediately thereafter and data was collected by means of digital audio recording. Noteworthy observational data (e.g., feeling unwell, unusual/interesting non-verbal reactions to questions and discussion, etc.) were collected during the interviews and documented in the transcriptions, these observational notes, however, were not a primary source of data collection in this study. The interviews were semi-structured with mostly

open ended questions. The semi-structured approach to interviewing has been used successfully in other exercise related studies (Christensen, Schmidt, Budtz-Jorgensen & Avlund, 2006).

To facilitate the discussion on how the participants valued each of the three psychological needs, they were given a value board and cue cards (see Appendix D). Each card represented one of the three psychological needs and the board was a 3 x 3 block design with value levels (1st, 2nd, 3rd level of importance) marking each row. Participants were asked to place each of the cards on the board at the levels they felt were representative of their own values/beliefs. With a 3 x 3 design, it was explained that more than one card could be at the same level and that, hypothetically, all three could be at the same level (placed side by side)

Data Analysis

Following a Hermeneutic approach to understanding, this study employed both categorical and holistic data analysis strategies with the Principle of the Hermeneutic Circle (Klein & Myers, 1999) as a guiding framework (see Appendix E). The Hermeneutic Circle is considered to be the fundamental principle of hermeneutic research (Klein & Myers) and is based on cyclical interpretations of data between the parts and the whole, as well as the researcher and the participants (Klein & Myers). Categorical analysis was used to illuminate the similarities and differences of the data into neat, organized chunks and this was imperative to addressing the research questions that relate to the varying components of the SDT framework. Holistic analysis was used to provide a “narrative portrait” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 274) of the people’s experiences and was used to more effectively portray the individual experiences and perspectives of these participants which, when read together, better depict the experience of older female

adults as initiate exercisers. All interviews were conducted, transcribed verbatim, and coded by the primary investigator, yielding 127 pages of transcribed text for subsequent analysis. In this process, the primary investigator listened to each recording and read each verbatim transcript carefully on multiple occasions to familiarize herself with the content of the participants' responses.

Following the hermeneutical approach to research (see Appendix E), the data were first analyzed holistically for each of the initiate interviews. Each interview was analyzed not only with the reflections of that participant's data, but also those of the preceding analyses (each step, a lower-level cycle of the hermeneutic circle). Categorical analysis of the initiate group's data was then conducted, completing one of two mid-level hermeneutic cycles. Holistic analyses of each reflective maintainer were then conducted in the same manner as the initiate sub-group (lower-level hermeneutic cycles), followed by a categorical analysis of this group's data (second mid-level hermeneutic cycle). Finally, a summary overview of all the participants' experiences was created to facilitate a better understanding of the 'whole', completing the last and highest level cycle of the hermeneutic circle in this study. While participant names and quotes were used heavily in the individual and sub-group analyses, they were omitted from the whole group analysis because the investigator felt at that level, after having read the individual and sub-group analyses, it was more important for the reader to take a step back and look at the "forest", and that pointing out individual trees would be distracting in this task. Though unique cases were highlighted to demonstrate unique features of the "forest", names were left out so that the reader remains focused on the forest, not the tree itself. Given the purpose of hermeneutic research is to understand the parts (i.e., each older female exerciser) with the

whole (i.e., initiate experience) and the whole with its parts, if all of the analyses were conducted by focusing on the compilation of the parts (bringing in specific individual cases), the full essence of the whole may have been lost. By removing individual identifiers from the summary overview, it allows the reader to see the data from a different view.

Direct quotations were formatted differently than the standard APA formatting in order to retain the essence and meaning of the participants' statements such that italicized words represent the participant emphasizing or holding a word longer. Bolded words represent those that were heavily stressed. Three periods represent a pause and statements reported in brackets are observations and/or clarifications included for the reader by the investigator

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is, essentially, the establishment of confidence in the research findings and practices (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rossman & Rallis, 2003) and can be addressed via four criteria: (a) Truth value, (b) Applicability, (c) Consistency, and (d) Neutrality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). *Truth value* (the qualitative parallel to internal validity), refers to credibility in that the findings should accurately represent the multiple realities presented by the constructors or participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Triangulation was one of two techniques used in this study to address concerns of credibility. *Triangulation* is the practice of using "multiple sources of confirmation when you want to draw a conclusion" (Willis, 2007, p. 218) and is "best used in qualitative studies that follow the postpositivist search for generalizations" (Willis, 2007, p. 219), as this one partially does. In compliance with this technique of rigor, there were multiple sources of data (6 participants; 2 types) from which to triangulate findings. A second

technique used to establish credibility/truth value of the findings was peer debriefing. As described by Sparkes (1998), peer debriefing is when “researchers expose their logic and interpretations to a disinterested peer who can then explore aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise have remained implicit only to the researcher” (p. 370). As such, following the primary investigator’s analyses, a second investigator was included to play the role of ‘Critical Friend’ within the context of querying data interpretations and challenging the conclusions drawn by the primary investigator. Consensus was not reached between the investigators with respect to data interpretations (see Appendix F).

Applicability (the qualitative parallel to external validity) is the second criterion and refers to how well/if the findings can be applied to other/similar contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Though the large scale generalizations sought out in quantitative work are not practical/ possible through qualitative inquiry, a similar concept called *transferability* is. This refers to how/if findings can be useful/informational in similar contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). *Thick description*, or in other words, highly descriptive accounts of the participants, their words, emotions and environment (Rossman & Rallis, 2003), was the technique employed for supporting transferability in this study. This was accomplished through the detailed analysis of verbatim transcripts from each interview. To gain greater depth from participant responses, probing and follow up questions were posed to the participants during the semi-structured interviews. *Consistency* (the qualitative parallel to reliability) is the third criterion and refers to dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Given the emergent nature of most qualitative work, preventing and avoiding change is not often possible or desired. Tracking and accounting for changes and consistencies, however, promotes confirmability and can be accomplished through

inquiry auditing (also known as *audit trails*) which is a record keeping process of the research project from start to finish, including raw data, analysis products, synthesis products, process notes, personal notes and information regarding instrument development (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Willis, 2007). This technique was used to promote the dependability and confirmability within this study by means of a research diary/reflexive journal (see Appendix F). The final criterion in establishing trustworthy research is *neutrality* (the qualitative parallel to objectivity) which refers to eliminating subjective bias and being impartial (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Given the *epistemological* and *ontological* foundations of this study, however, achieving complete neutrality is not conceivable. Instead, a personal biography of both the primary and secondary investigators are included as part of the audit trail in the form of a reflexive journal (Appendix F) which also documents the thoughts and reflections of the primary investigator throughout the research process which may have influenced the interpretation of the data.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the standards of competency and ethical conduct by employing the supervision of an experienced faculty member at Brock University and the guidance of committee members familiar with this area of research, as well as, obtaining ethical approval from the university's research ethics board prior to commencing recruitment and data collection. An informed consent form was signed by all participants, and a summary of results will be provided to interested participants. With regards to the researcher-participant relationship, those individuals being interviewed may have felt more trusting or eager to disclose information to the researcher of this study, as she is also female and has a shared interest in exercise. Light refreshments of the participants'

preference were also offered during the interview session, not only to create a more informal atmosphere in order to help increase participant comfort and trust, but also to show them that their time and contributions are important and appreciated.

Participation in this study was voluntary and therefore if individuals did not feel comfortable answering specific questions, they were not required or pressured to do so. A few participants, however, did become emotional when discussing the passing of a loved one. The investigator was mindful of their emotional state and tried to discuss the issue (only insofar as it pertained to their exercise experiences) in a supportive manner. All participants received a list of local professional counseling contacts during the introduction to the interview in the event that the participants wished to further discuss topics arising from the interview in more detail. To ensure not only the protection of the participants' identities, but a more authentic and genuine representation of their accounts, pseudonyms were chosen by the participants themselves. All documentation, other than the informed consent, was tracked with this pseudonym. A cross reference list was kept by the primary investigator for the duration of data collection and analyses in the event that particular data may warrant revisiting or clarification by the participants. The list will be destroyed upon completion of the final thesis defense.

Chapter 4 - Results

Holistic Analyses

Holistic analyses of all participants were conducted. Due to the length of each narrative portrait, the results from these analyses are included in the appendix (see Appendix G). For the purposes of this document, the categorical sub-group analyses and the summary overview will be the primary foci.

Categorical Analysis: Initiate Exercisers

Participant Characteristics

Demographic, physical activity, and functional independence data from all initiate participants (IN's) are provided in Tables 1 and 2 respectively. There were 3 participants classified as initiate exercisers (Laura, Australia, and Brandy). The mean age of this group was 73.33 ($SD = 6.35$) years of age, all were Caucasian and all married. All participants providing responses to the Barthel Index (Mahoney & Barthel, 1965) were considered functionally independent. All three had BMI scores over 25.00 kg/m^2 ($M = 27.56 \text{ kg/m}^2$; $SD = 3.04$), which in younger populations would be classified as 'overweight', and only one had a BMI score over 30 kg/m^2 (Laura = 31.00 kg/m^2), classifying her as 'obese' (USDHHS, 1998).

Each of the initiates were at different stages of exercise adoption. Laura, the newest of the three, was in the early stages of exercise adoption (3 weeks), attending the YMCA's Aqua Fit class 2 days per week plus walking one day per week for 3 weeks. Australia, the most experienced of the three initiates, was nearing the maintenance phase (23 weeks), participating in an unofficial strength training class 3 days per week. The third, Brandy, was a returning initiate who had begun her exercise program earlier in the

year but was required to take 7 months off in order to care for her husband. At the time of the interview, she had been exercising for four weeks (total of 20 weeks in the past 12 months) engaging in Aqua Fit classes 2 times per week, as well as cycling and walking 2 times per week. Though Laura reported the greatest energy expenditure of the three (3790 kcal/week), most of this activity was work related not exercise. Brandy reported the greatest energy expenditure from vigorous physical activity (2120 kcal/week). Overall, this group was classified as active, based on current guidelines, expending on average 5.29 kcal/kg/day on physical activity in the week leading up to their interviews (Gilmour, 2007).

Emergent Themes Related to Motivation and the Initiate Experience

In relation to motivation and the initiate experience, the major themes that emerged from the initiate group data included: (a) exercise being a solution to an important problem, (b) wanting to do more, (c) friends who are successful exercisers, (d) supportive physicians, and (e) taking time for one's self. With respect to exercise adherence and the aging experience, emergent themes included: (a) first impressions (first day of exercising), (b) the influence of the exercise groups and built and natural environments, and (c) the impact of illness and injury. In terms of psychological need salience, themes that emerged included (a) negative interpretations of 'autonomy', (b) sharing the decision making, (c) succeeding in the face of challenge, (d) and meaningful connections being a 'bonus'. Exploratory findings pertaining to mental well-being, need thwarting, and need importance are also reported.

Exercise as a Solution to an Important Problem

For the initiates, the primary motive for starting an exercise program as an older adult was to solve an existing problem such as high stress levels, inflexibility, or poor

balance. Not simply because these areas of their health needed improving, but because they relate to other health concerns that are personally important to each of them and they value the role that exercise plays in ameliorating these conditions. In Laura's case, she experiences mobility complaints from arthritis. Because she is very active in the community with church and volunteer work, it is important for her to be able to function optimally and she views exercise as a way to improve her mobility by improving her flexibility.

“Well, it's uh, the flexibility mainly. That is the biggest thing for me right now at this stage. [To improve] mobility and you know, getting out of cars and off the couch” (Laura)

Aside from having two young grandchildren whom she cares for on a regular basis, Australia is a well read individual who likes to learn and has been educating herself on health related matters for some time. As such, preventive medicine is something highly valued by Australia and it was her main motive for beginning formal exercise at this stage in her life. Furthermore, she had been noticing that her balance was becoming worse -a problem that is even more alarming for her given that her medications have weakened her skin tissue over the years- making her more prone to open wound injuries.

“I *came* with good intentions thinking this is going to be the *answer*. I am going to *really* –because I've told you, I was worried about my balance and um... one of the balance things is that uh, because I've been on this cortisone/prednisone for all these years, one of the *bad* things it does is thin your skin and I have had ... maybe *twelve* lots of stitches because I have... knocked my leg on something... *and* so, I have to be really ... careful about that, and um... one of the *recent* ones was (says with a bit of a laugh) –last summer I was helping my little grandson ride his bicycle and he's got the training wheels, you know, he's five and half now and –anyway I turned and tried to help him up the driveway, and I mean, I just *fell* and had a *big* gash in my leg and *then* I was out walking with my daughter sometime afterwards... *and*... *again* I fell and I just –and I noticed –I didn't hurt myself that time- and I *noticed* that I fell *easily* and of course if I had *known* about core strength and balance and *that* was -it was almost like having the perfect fit when my friend said “why don't you come to my *class*?”... and it's,

you know, we lift weights and it's –you balance on a ball and it's really good for *that*. Then I realized that... that was what I needed –and it is exactly what I need” (Australia)

“I knew it was going to be good. It's like taking medicine; you know it's going to be good for you and you think, “*Oh!*”, you know, “Can I stand it?” and “*Oh*, here it comes again!”... *but* it doesn't seem to take long before you –you get into the – the good of it” (Australia)

For Brandy, avoiding the use of prescription drugs is of utmost importance and is a major theme throughout her interview. She is currently not taking any medication, but she recognizes that she is at risk due to increasing blood pressure and decreasing bone density levels, and is hoping that exercise will help ward off these conditions so that she will not be in need of medication.

“I don't want to take medication... so, I'm *trying*... to see if [exercise is] going to work. (giggles) And... the *test* will *be* when I have my ... bone density, but I won't have that until June, but uh... with the *bones*... and that's another thing – walking is supposed to help that too. So –yah, so... uh, he's gonna do a bone density in June and I was... I didn't have osteoporosis or... I'm not quite osteopenia. So that's what I'm fighting for, 'cause I *don't* want to take the medication. So... we'll see whether that works or not. That's my... my motivation.” (Brandy)

All initiates reported notions of enjoyment and the belief that one ought to exercise in their accounts of reasons for exercising. Australia's interview, unlike her counterparts who are both newer to exercise than she is, also indicates she is motivated to exercise because of how it improves her physical appearance through weight management.

“The other thing was, uh... which I haven't mentioned before, is um, that I, you know, after *menopause* women *do* put on weight and it's very difficult to look nice in your clothes *and* it's hard to lose that weight *and* um... I find although I haven't *lost* a lot of weight, I did in the *beginning*, but it sort of stream-lined me and I look better in my clothes and I can wear clothes that I haven't been able to wear for a long time, so... that's important –aesthetically, it's important too. Does [exercise] change your outlook on life? I don't really think so, but it does make you feel better in your *clothes*! You're “*Oh! Now, you've lost weight!*” you know,

and you feel *so* good. I mean, we *all* feel good when people think we look nice in our clothes”

“I Want to Do More”: Squeezing It In and Making It Up

In the case of all three initiates, they are motivated to do more exercise than their programs require of them and like to use any extra time they might have to be active. They also reported feeling disappointed when they are forced to miss their exercise times. Regardless of whether it is due to illness, vacation, or other responsibilities, when they know they are going to be missing their classes, they try to make up that time with other activities, or come in on an extra day.

“I do lengths swimming when I’m finished. Yeah, just maybe five times or six times -under ten times... or if I come a little early, like the last time I came earlier and left earlier, so uh ... I didn’t do the lengths, but I was hopping and ... and I felt that was real good for my *feet*.” (Laura)

“You know, I just look forward to –to *going* and I’ve made up my mind that I’m going to do it five times a week... so I’ll just have to *change* my schedule this week, you know? *Sometimes* I’ll go on a Saturday when my daughter’s down, but she usually has to head back on Sunday, but... if she goes early Sunday –before she goes back- then we go Saturday and Sunday” (Brandy)

“Part of coming here *and* feeling that I’m getting a really good workout and developing these muscles and *strong* legs and *seeing* myself able to do things that I *couldn’t* do in the beginning... it makes me think, um... “Oh, well, you know, I can probably –I’ll probably go out at 1 o’clock today, on a Saturday (says with a chuckle), for a walk...” (Australia)

“My Friend Has Been Coming Here for Years”

Another prevalent theme that emerged from the initiates’ responses was the presence of an important other who had already established themselves as a successful regular exerciser. In the case of Australia and Brandy, this was the same person who had recommended them to their respective programs. Though Laura began exercising upon her doctor’s recommendation, she discovered that a cousin of hers was already attending the YMCA. For all three initiates, these friends who are ‘established’ exercisers seemed

to be an important source of inspiration, motivation, and meaningful connection in their initial stages of exercise adoption; like a role model. It is interesting to note as well, that each of these friends are female and that while Australia's husband has been active at the YMCA for many years, it was not until her friend suggested the program (one that appealed to her) that she purchased her membership.

"Well, the *friend* who told me about this exercise program, I mean, she's been my friend for 30 years. I said to her one day, you know, how I *tried* –you know, "Here I am *trying* to lose weight, but I'm not good at it" and she said, "Well, maybe you'd like my exercise class" and... it was just one of those little things she hadn't *told* me about. I knew she came to the Y, but I didn't realize the *class* and so *that's* actually how it happened" (Australia)

"Well, actually, my *daughter* got me started, 'cause she uh... reg –exercises regularly and she thought it would be good for me and it is! It just um, makes us *motivate* each other, probably ... although I probably need more motivating than *she* does (laughs). Well... because I'm *older* and it's easy to say "I don't feel like going today"" (Brandy)

"When I came here I found three friends, so I have friends when I come here, so it's okay (giggles). That helps me comin'. There is one girl here that swims 40 lengths and actually, she married my cousin and this is where – I didn't know I would meet her here, but I did! We also do the quilting. It's a good feeling when you have somebody who knows you from way back and... and you have things in common that you like". (Laura)

"My Doctor Really Likes That I'm Doing This"

In all three cases, the initiates' doctors have played an important role in their decision to exercise by presenting the benefits of exercise for their conditions without 'prescribing' it as a necessary treatment, but as potentially effective adjunct therapy. As such, none of the initiates have felt pressured by their physicians, nor their friends who are established exercisers, in their exercise adoption. Rather, they perceive these important others as informants who planted a seed in their mind, but feel that they themselves are the source of their decision to actually exercise. Interestingly, if their

doctors *were* to prescribe exercise to them, not all of the initiates would feel obligated to heed the physician's advice if they did not want to.

"The doctor... he really likes the idea that I'm doing this, you know? ... I feel you have to get up and get moving because... uh, you know –the doctor always feels – says "Do you exercise?" and they *ask* me if I did it. I like it that they *care* that I'm doing things." (Brandy)

"My doctor has *never* said "You're going to be dead if you don't *do* something", you know, I've never had *that*, 'cause they don't. They sort of say "Now a little *weight* lifting would be good" –that was a *long* time ago. If I wanted to *stop*, I could... *I'm* the one –I mean, my doctor, you know, if my doctor said "Do this or that"... I'd have to do whatever the doctor *said*, but um, *no*, I'm in charge. Can you think of anybody else who *should* be?" (Australia)

"Well, my doctor *suggested* I go for Aqua Fitness 'cause I was complaining about these little ailments, you know, and he figured that should do it, so we'll see, [but] I'm in charge of [my exercise] (laughs). 'Cause I don't have to go if I didn't want to (laughs)" (Laura)

"Taking Back Time for Me"

These women recognize that there is more to the process of aging than physical changes, for their lifestyles, social roles, and priorities are changing too. As women and mothers, the demands placed on them in the family sphere of their lives are different now. As Australia indicates, "You *don't* have all these little children's wishes to come before your own". Though they are still involved in their children's and grandchildren's lives, they play a secondary role in their upbringing which allows them more freedom to pursue other avenues. This does not necessarily translate into extra time, however, as they are generally very committed to these other avenues and as Brandy explains, "it *takes longer* to do things" as one ages.

"I know everybody else is going through it too at this age. We all tell each other (laughs) how "I used to be able to do *that* in *half* the time, I can't figure it out! So, even if you're exercising things *do* take longer... so, we just... tolerate *that*... (laughs) do what we can *when* we can" (Brandy)

Australia feels that women of her generation (herself included), have become more assertive in the years leading up to and entering older adulthood. Though still very active in community activities and the management of her household, Australia feels that now is an appropriate time to take back time for herself and explore other avenues that are personally meaningful to her.

“You *do* become more assertive, but I don’t think that’s related to *exercising*. I think that’s related to *aging*. You suddenly think, you know, *all* those years where you *didn’t* do this because you *had to this* –or ... you know, the *children*, the *family* and ... –but you *do* become more assertive. It’s something that happens to women, I think... uh... when they get into their 50s, I would say... in *my* generation –perhaps it won’t be in *yours*” (Australia)

“I’ve been volunteering a lot for the last 30 years and uh, it’s time to have more time for myself, so this is one thing” (Laura)

Adherence, Environment, and the Aging Experience: Overcoming Barriers

The First Day Jitters

“*It is only at the first encounter that a face makes its full impression on us*”
-Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)

Though now enjoying their respective programs, the initial experiences of the participants were not always so pleasant. Despite encountering difficulties on their first days of formal exercise at the YMCA, Laura and Australia were able to overcome their respective challenges: Laura, by problem solving; Australia, with a little support from her friend. Brandy’s first experiences likely went smoother because she started with a personal trainer, whom she connected with instantly and trusted, and who was likely able to guide her with one-on-one, individually tailored advice and instruction.

“Well, the first time I didn’t know where to go, all the rows were finished, and so I stayed at the back and it got too deep and I couldn’t do too much (laughs) of the Aqua Fitness, but then I got a little smarter the *second* time I came back and, and I could do more because it wasn’t quite as deep and uh ... it just makes me feel better all around. It makes me feel as if I could even walk better back to the car!” (Laura)

“Well... uh, when I first began I remember my friend Lonna said “some people fall off their balls, Australia!” (says with a chuckle) I went and I just felt I was *so* hopeless. I’d wondered if I would get through the *first* one and afterwards went down and Lonna said “You look –do you feel faint?” (chuckles). It was just very *slow* and then you see that everybody else is *so* good and they balance so well and –you know, it’s **hard!** I honestly thought I was going to faint during that first lesson and when I went downstairs and the friend who brought me said “put your head down”, and I thought: “I don’t know if I’ll be able to do this”, *but...* of course, it *does* get easier and um, there are times when it’s really *hard*, I mean, I’ve got muscles that I’d never had before and my *legs* are stronger than they’ve ever been before –less *flabby*, um... still –you know, I’m *still* learning and uh, getting better –*I hope...* but um, it really *has* made, I think, a big difference in um... in everything.” (Australia)

The Group: “Come on Girls, let’s get going!”

All three initiates participate in group exercise classes, though they also do some exercise on their own as well. The Aqua Fit classes are predominantly made up of older women, while Australia’s class is exclusively older women. These relatively homogeneous classes of older female exercisers seem to have played a role in the experiences of the three women as initiates. They feel it is a comfort to know that there are other empathetic people going through similar life experiences and physical changes as they are. In Australia’s case, her exercise leader is also an older female adult. Though she does not feel it is necessary to have a leader who is close to the same age, she finds it reassuring to see her leader struggling with some of the exercises too.

“At first, I would say *definitely*, when I *came* it was very *comforting* to see that everybody else had *grey* hair and –and they were –it was *hard...* I’m not saying they had the same struggles as me, although there were struggles, but you can hear –you know, even in the leader’s voice: “fooorty... tweeenty...” [said with feigned exhaustion] and you knew it was a struggle for her *too*. Would I join a class downstairs of *step* aerobic young people –like... yourself? *No*, I probably wouldn’t” (Australia)

“Well, at least we’re all in the same, you know, we all need the same thing and there’s other people that feel like I do. (chuckles)” (Laura)

“Everybody says funny things like “Oh! Let’s go home now!” and it’s sort of helpful hearing other people grunting and groaning or saying “Ah! That nearly killed me!” (Australia)

Both Brandy and Australia appreciate the camaraderie that has developed within their groups over time. Brandy, being a self-professed “quiet” person did not experience that camaraderie right from the start, but “it didn’t take long”. For Australia, approaching 6 months of regular exercise, the group is very important to her; it is a source of motivation, because she feels that having the support and kinship of a group of women makes the exercise experience more inherently pleasing than exercising at home on her own. Through viewing the group as friends or “pals”, she has also developed a sense of accountability, in that she feels a strong bond to the women in her class and does not want to disappoint them, or her leader, by not attending.

“I tried [at home] for a while, but –you know, you ... give up and sort of lose interest – I don’t know... that’s why I think there’s something about... the group... you don’t want to let the class down, you know, they’re sort of pals, so... there’s something about being with a group of women. There’s something about that because they’re ... sisterly and “Come on, Australia!” and “Oh, no! You put your ball here”” (Australia)

“When you’re doing the weights you’re on your own, but when you’re in the class ... then you have that camaraderie (giggles) and that’s nice.” (Brandy)

The Built and Natural Environments

The YMCA of Niagara is used as a focal point to showcase the organization for staff throughout Canada. The building has a very unique, open concept plan that allows for much natural lighting, effective use of space, and easy flow of traffic. Laura finds the modernity alone to be a source of motivation.

*“I like the idea of the beautiful surroundings, I really like it. It’s a very interesting building and that... **that** can motivate you too –getting’ to something different than just seeing your own home or where you do your, your um, volunteer work. It just makes you feel good, you know uh, coming to such a beautiful place. I think it’s worth it. ‘Cause you can get into a rut after a while, you know... and*

this gets you out and, uh, like I say, it's nice and modern. You see all kinds of people" (Laura)

For all of the initiates, having memberships at the YMCA has been helpful in improving their ability to exercise, because the facility itself assists them in overcoming barriers and challenges associated with the natural environment and weather conditions, especially ice and snow in the winter. For Laura, because of her arthritis, the air pressure also challenges her ability to perform physical activities, regardless of the season.

"Well, like the weather has a lot to do with it. If I'm out walking ... and I walk very slow and I blame it on the weather, that makes me ... I'm sort of like a thermometer. I get **stiff** and then I get *loose*, and then I get **stiff**! (laughs)" (Laura)

"It's harder in the winter and it *hasn't* been a good winter ... for walking, um... although *last* year I got –I have a pair of those, um, things that you put on your shoes –**tracks**! To help you walk on the ice and *many* is the time I used that last year when I *wasn't* coming to the class because I'd sort of feel that "I've *got* to get up and get my walk in this morning"" (Australia)

"That's why I'm doing the indoor track when I finish, 'cause I thought I should try to do *some* walking. It's *safer* in there (laughs) than icy streets" (Brandy)

Both poor and warm weather influence the exercise activity of this group. While Australia has been formally exercising long enough to see a range of physical and psychological changes, and has no intention of stopping her program when the summer arrives, Laura has only been exercising for a few weeks and views her program at the YMCA as a seasonal commitment, in that she has no intention of continuing her program through the summer months "because it's too hot!" and she would rather be doing other activities such as gardening and cooking.

"I've got gardening and, and other exercise and things to do. I don't want to be tied down to uh, anything. There's gardening... and I do *a lot* of canning and cooking. Seems that's where I spend most of my time and then give it to the kids" (Laura)

“I’m committed to *coming*, um... I’ll be here in the *summer*... I mean, I can’t see myself *stopping* this program, because ... I –you know, they’re um... there are *too* many benefits ... that I can *see*... every day!” (Australia)

Health-Related Impediments

Two other themes that emerged in relation to the adherence of older adult initiate exercisers to their exercise programs were illness and injury. For example, both Brandy and Australia were recovering from colds and flues at the time of their interviews.

Though these temporary ailments only caused them to miss a day or two of their exercise programs, they know of other people who have had to take long or indefinite periods of time off due to health related infirmities.

“People have been *ill*. There’ve been a lot of people off for *surgery*, a couple of people *have* had uh, surgery and been quite ill... and gone away for other reasons –a *wedding* or something. They’ve *all* –uh, *one* came back shortly, but I think she’s gone to Florida or somewhere now. She had... *some* kind of internal surgery and I think she wasn’t able to exercise for quite a while.” (Australia)

Sometimes the impediments of one exerciser affect the adherence of another. For instance, after four months of regularly exercising at the YMCA, Brandy had to drop out of her program for seven months in order to care for her husband after he had knee surgery.

“He had the *knee surgery* and he’s only got 30% in his *other* knee. I was *so* disappointed that I couldn’t *go*.” (Brandy)

Psychological Need Salience in Life and Exercise Experiences

Autonomy? “That Sounds Bad!”

The notion of autonomy appeared to elicit some confusion. Laura and Australia both interpreted this, initially, as being controlling over *other* people and had a negative perception of the concept.

“I don’t know what to do with that one! (laughs) It looks **bad**. Well, when it’s in words. See, when you’re working with other people you have to do it together” (Laura)

“This one makes -sounds as if you’re a *control* freak and I’ve *never* seen myself as *that!*” (Australia)

Follow-up clarification that the idea was referring to their *own* decisions and behaviours, not *others*, was successful, resulting in more eagerness to reveal ways in which they felt in charge of their lives. While Laura feels as though she is always in charge of her decisions and behaviours, Australia and Brandy appeared less exclamatory in their responses, for their decisions and behaviours are heavily influenced by their partnership with their husbands.

“Well, I’m *always* in charge (laughs)... it feels like I’m always in charge.” (Laura)

“Well, I *am* in charge of everything (laughs) –I just *do* what I *have* to do and that’s it. I –I don’t uh –you know... well, we always talk things over, but I just uh, go ahead and do what *has* to be done.” (Brandy)

“I suppose in *most* ways I am, um... I mean, if I said to my husband “I want to go to Australia tomorrow”, he’d probably say “Yes”, but I’d be thinking um... you know, no matter whether it’s this time that he’s not well or I’d be thinking “I won’t ask that”, do you know what I mean?” (Australia)

With respect to exercise, each of the initiates feels as though she is the one who is in charge of making the decision to go the YMCA. Brandy notes, however, that chronic conditions such as her osteoarthritis impinge upon some of the types of exercise she would like to do.

“No, I’m in charge of [my exercise] (laughs). ‘Cause I don’t have to go if I didn’t want to (laughs)” (Laura)

“Well, I’m in *complete* charge, aren’t I? I mean, if I wanted to *stop*, I could” (Australia)

“Well, I don’t have to *ask* anybody, I just say “This is what I’m going to do”... so, as long as I –I feel *physically* able, then I’m in control there. The only thing we’re avoiding is anything that might cause a problem with the osteoarthritis ... so, *certain* machines I can’t *use*, but there’s others that I probably will be able to.” (Brandy)

Sharing the Decision Making

Participants reported not minding shared decision making involved in various behaviours so long as it is beneficial to them. For instance, Laura values law enforcement even though she is not directly involved in making national level legal decisions and Brandy is happy to turn over the organization and responsibility of Christmas dinner to the younger adults in the family, because she has “done it for over 40 years” and now can “sit back and enjoy it a bit more”.

“Oh, listen! I don’t mind, uh, giving uh, the authority over to someone else and let them take over and um, I don’t mind if they make *some* decisions... actually, I’m not always such a good decision *maker* (laughs). I find it hard to do.” (Laura)

As new exercisers, the idea of handing over decision making to an exercise leader was not problematic to these initiates. Relinquishing authority appeared predicated on the decision to seek the guidance and trust in the instructor who was leading them in ways that will help them. Initiates reported that they value the guidance of their leaders, and do not feel obligated to follow through with everything the instructor asks of them if they do not feel up to it, or if the demands are unreasonable, given they are not evaluated on performance.

“It gives us ideas. You gotta get ideas from *other* people. Um, you’re not always right (laughs). [The instructor] has to give me the –show me the ins and outs... as long as she doesn’t *make me* do 40 lengths or something (laughs). Either you *do* it or you *don’t* do it. You see, you don’t get marked on it and it’s all up to you. Whatever you do, it’s up to you.” (Laura)

“Well, no, I don’t mind at all. –Like, when you’re in your class, you’ve got your instructor and she’s showing you how to do different things. You have to *know*

how to do things, so... it doesn't –you *have* to have an instructor in some cases, 'cause then you're going to do it *properly* and you won't hurt yourself." (Brandy)

"You *can* really just say "Just do this. Do as much as you can. Do as many sit-ups as you can" – sort of thing. If something I'm doing is really tiresome, I sort of ... you know, maybe do ... every *other* one (says with a chuckle). There are some who go "Oh, I've got my... whatever-it-is that's *bad* and I won't be..." you know, and they just don't *do*... whatever it is, because they've got a bad shoulder or something, you know, they're seniors." (Australia)

Succeeding in the Face of Challenge

Confidence in one's ability to manage household duties was the common thread between each initiate's perceived ability across life domains, with time being the main challenge they are faced with in pursuing these activities. Other areas include hobbies such as learning new music for the piano and successfully completing volunteer work in the community.

"*Well*... I think in *managing* household things... and um, well I like playing the piano... and *reading* new music... I try to learn new music every day. So that's *my* challenge, there (laughs). Yah, and the –like things around the house and I like doing them, but I don't like uh... being short of *time*. That makes it... a little bit harder." (Brandy)

"I've been [at the charity shop] a long time. I know the ins and outs and... and there's other people that don't know as much, and... um... they're newer. They're just coming in, so I'm training some. And uh, so I feel confident in that part." (Laura)

"In com –community volunteering, I *suppose* (coughs) ... and house –always household things a-go. They're the things that make my life interesting." (Australia)

In relation to physical activity, all three appear confident in their abilities to exercise, but their responses reflect the sense that their perceived competence may be thwarted when uncontrollable influences, such as the weather, exacerbate the conditions they have developed through aging and challenge their physical mobility. Since Laura and Brandy both deal with different forms of arthritis, they both recognize that it is much

more difficult to be successful at exercise during periods of arthritic pain. Also, Laura and Australia feel that, as new exercisers, a lack of knowledge and experience impacts the confidence they have in their ability to complete certain exercises. For Australia in particular, her perceived competence was also hindered when she first started, due to the worries she had over what other people thought of her exercise performance.

“You sort of feel... that everybody’s thinking “Oh, my gosh! ... She’s not very – not catching onto this very well”. I mean, you kind of have that feeling, while nobody ever *said* anything like that and they probably *weren’t* thinking that at *all*” (Australia)

“Right now I’m learning all the, all the –motions! And you have to do the left and the right leg and just the other way around you get a little mixed up. So I’m still learning that! (laughs)” (Laura)

“Well, *very* confident... yah. There *isn’t* anything that ... will make me unable to do it, *unless* ... I have a *spasm* with this osteoarthritis ... so I’m trying to keep it – like *being* flexible, I think, holds it back.” (Brandy)

“I blame it on the weather. That makes me... I’m sort of like a thermometer: I get **stiff** and then I get *loose*, and then I get **stiff**! (laughs) And uh, so it all depends on how flexible I am” (Laura)

Meaningful Connections are a Bonus

Initiates reported deriving their sense of meaningful connection and belonging primarily from individuals in their families, especially husbands and daughters, as well as the individuals they have come to know through community work.

“Well, whenever we’re doing things as a family, or ... uh, you know, *visiting* people... I just uh, feel *close* to everyone on *my* side and... and my husband’s side. So we try to help each other –*everybody* tries to help each other.” (Brandy)

“My *husband* is influential *because* uh, well, he’s my -the person I *live* with, we have lots of things in common... the person I *travel* with... um, have *children* with too –children and grandchildren -very special with my grandchildren ... and um... I have a *daughter*, who I’m really close to, and my friend Lonna you know, I think, you know, she’s *really* ... *ya*.” (Australia)

“Well, with my family members it’s a little different... than with people that you [volunteer] with... but uh, they can be just as close to me as uh, as a family”
(Laura)

As previously discussed with regards to the exercise group and their established exercise friends, the initiates have also found a sense of meaningful connection within the social sphere of their exercise environments. Based on the accounts of these women, this sense of unity appears to strengthen over time and extends to people other than exercise classmates, such as personal trainers and loosely to facility staff workers. Laura, while still new to her class and the YCMA, relies on a small number of people whom she has either just met or previously knew. Brandy recognizes some of the classmates she had before she left and is developing a greater connection to the rest of her group. Also, she feels particularly connected to the personal trainer who helped start her in her resistance training program. Australia, having spent considerably more time with her classmates, feels stronger connections to all of them. None of the initiates, however, are greatly driven to exercise for social aspects of the activity. Rather, it is a supplemental aspect of the experience that they enjoy.

“When I came here I found three friends, so I have friends when I come here, so it’s okay.” (Laura)

“Yah, I’ve met a few people here and, as a matter of fact, in the class a... woman used to be in the choir with me at church and she’s in the *class* and we just met a couple weeks ago, so ... that was a nice feeling. As she said, it was a *bonus* to meet up.” (Brandy)

“That’s sort of a *bonus* that you see one another three mornings a week. Not for very *long* ... and not to *talk* much, but it ups the relationship” (Australia)

Exploratory Findings

Mental Well-Being

The initiates perceived their mental well-being to be “really good” during and after exercise, regardless of whether their perceived mental well-being was pretty good or could be improved globally in life. Australia felt that she could not comment on her mental well-being during exercise because she is too focused on her exercise to think about it. When discussing their most recent bout of exercise, none of the initiates perceived the satisfaction of their needs to be thwarted as a result of their exercise experience that day. Rather, the satisfaction of the psychological needs always either a) remained stable or b) improved compared to how they felt before coming into the YMCA on that day. This was true even for Brandy who had been dealing with the death of a loved one, as well as the onset of a bad cold, and had been feeling particularly low on that day. As such, she felt just as in charge of her decisions and behaviours as usual, but her confidence in her abilities and sense of connection to others was lacking. Though she was hoping it would help, Brandy suspects that exercising did not improve her well-being at that time because her mind was pre-occupied with her loss and her body was becoming weak.

“I just wanted to get in there, do the exercise and get out ... that was my feeling” (Brandy)

“You never have time to think about your *problems* because you’re *so* concentrating on “*Oh, is that one coming next?*” or –you know, *moving* your legs and uh, that sort of –you know, *moving* and –and doing it” (Australia)

“It seems to be real good [while exercising] (chuckles) I don’t know ... there’s no other challenges than what’s in front of you” (Laura)

Psychological Need Thwarting

The initiates reported that need thwarting exercise experiences would not bring them down if they were already having a mentally good day in general. Rather, they would tell themselves that it would be better tomorrow/next time. For instance, if her

exercise performance was not as good as usual, Brandy would not be inclined to give up or feel badly, she would simply accept that it was an off day. When Australia first started exercising she felt embarrassed when she could not perform as well as she expected. Since her early days, however, she has come to see that everyone is there to improve themselves, not to compete with each other and now attributes her poor performances to specific reasons, such as illness or just having a bad day. For Laura it would not matter because she is not being evaluated by anyone but herself.

“Well, I wouldn’t be depressed. I would feel I’ll do better next time. So, I know... I think I *know* my limitations, you know? It wouldn’t uh, get me down in any way. I –I would feel... “Well, I couldn’t do it *today*, but I’ll do it *next* time”. So I wouldn’t *give up* on it, I’d still try to get to the level I want to be at.” (Brandy)

“I suppose you’d find a reason. *Today* I –I was really *sweating* and at times got *tired* and *muscle* ache and I *knew* it was because I’d been unable to do very much [because of having been ill]. So, you sort of think uh... “Darn this! But there’s a *reason*”. If I *really* did badly that day um ... I’d probably go, “Oh! You had a bad day, but you’ll do better tomorrow –next time”. I don’t think I’d feel, “*Oh!* Well, better pack it in! *That* wasn’t very good”.” (Australia)

“No, it doesn’t matter. Because there’s nobody to mark you (smiles and laughs). You do what you like! (laughs) It’s a free world; we have a choice.” (Laura)

With respect to sources and types of support in the exercise environment, the initiates also felt that it would be okay for their exercise leader to take more control of decision making than usual, so long as it was helpful to them. If their extra involvement was perceived as detrimental, they would be inclined to inform their instructor that they could not follow their lead. Australia feels that in a class setting big decisions should be made in a democratic fashion. For example, at the end of one of her classes, a classmate spoke to their leader about yoga and the leader said they would do yoga at the next class. The idea of a full class of yoga did not sit well with Australia because she likes the exercises they already do and did not feel it was fair for the leader to change the entire

program without consulting the rest of the group first. When she arrived the next day, she was happy to discover that yoga would only be done during the last 15 minutes of the class, but feels that she would not have been overly upset if it had taken up the whole class either.

“That isn’t *right*! That isn’t what you *do* when you’re... in a *class*” you know, you have to be more democratic than that. You –you go to the yoga class yourself *or* you have a vote or something, but I –life’s too short to get upset about things like that, so it wouldn’t have upset me *really*.” (Australia)

While the initiates value their friendships and the support they experience for their exercise behaviour from important others, they do not feel that they need to come into contact with those important others to still feel good during their classes. They may feel a little disappointed that their friends are not there, but it is a short lived sentiment that disappears once the class is underway. In fact, sometimes they prefer not to interact with classmates because it distracts them from the class itself.

“I’m *there* to do the exercises and that’s the important thing. I figure I’ve got 45 minutes and I could talk *any* time when I’m *not* there and I –I don’t want to waste the time talking and missing what we’re supposed to be doing” (Brandy)

“They can affect you a *little* bit. You know, sometimes I *go*, uh, and maybe my friend isn’t *there* and, I mean, you know, it’s like having a dear friend anyway – you really, you *miss* it... *and* oh, you know, you go in and you know that she’s not –it looks like she’s not *coming* and you get there, but that only lasts for the first ... *minutes* and then you’re too busy with your exercising to *notice* – to really *care* about anything else” (Australia)

“Oh, it makes no difference. Last time I didn’t see her –I only seen her once! (laughs)” (Laura)

Perceived Importance of Psychological Needs

As a Person

In reflecting upon their values and what is most important to themselves as people, the initiates almost unanimously agreed that feeling effective, connected, and

volitional were equally important. Laura was the exception and felt that confidence in her abilities was more important than volition and connectedness. While Brandy does believe that all three needs are equally important and feels that when she has all of those things in her life, she is better off, she speculates that one's confidence in their abilities may vary in importance over one's lifetime, particularly as one grows older. Both Australia and Brandy were firm in their decisions that connections with others was of primary importance, because "if you don't have meaningful connections to other people, what are you? Nothing!" (Australia)

"You might feel differently about it at different times in your life, your confidence, depending on your *strengths*. That's right, 'cause even uh –you know, *walking* sometimes you feel, "Oh, I feel a little *shaky*!" sometimes –you know? And that's going with... the *age* problem." (Brandy)

In Relation to Being an Exerciser

Though all three initiates believed that connections with others was of primary importance to society in general, and most felt the same in terms of themselves as people, this was not the case in terms of the value they placed on connectedness as an exerciser. Laura was the newest of the initiates and the only person to endorse connectedness in exercise as primarily important. For Laura, knowing she is "in the same boat" as her classmates provides reassurance and in turn supports her efforts in achieving her goals.

"There's a group... it's a group therapy thing... and you do it together" (Laura)

Brandy, who is more advanced in her exercise adoption, placed relatedness in the secondary position and Australia, who is approaching maintenance, placed relatedness in the tertiary position. This was unexpected given how passionately she speaks of her exercise group and her claims that they are a source of motivation and deep meaningful connection in her exercise behaviour. As she explains, however, she stands behind her

former statements but feels that while relatedness *is* important to her in her exercise behaviour, it is the *least* important of the three needs because she is confident that, with having experienced so many physical and psychological benefits, she would still be motivated to exercise even if she did not have meaningful connections in her exercise environment. Brandy's perspective is similar in that she feels that her exercise experience is more personally focussed and that while it is nice to have the support and companionship of others, everyone is still there to do their own thing.

"If I went and uh, didn't really *care* that much for the people in my class, I think I'd still *go*... unless, you know, they were really obnoxious. Then I probably wouldn't go [taps her finger on the table]. I would go even if my friend quit the class and even if um, other people *changed* and moved around and died, I would still *go*." (Australia)

Autonomy and competence, on the other hand, were both placed in the primary position by all three initiates, with the exception of Australia who placed competence in the position of secondary importance. In reflecting upon her first experiences almost six months prior to the interview, however, she believes that competence would have been of primary importance to her in the beginning.

"*Confidence* in your abilities –I mean, that *comes* with *going* to the class! When I *first* exercised... well, I guess I worried about the con –*yes*, I would *think* probably *that* [referring to Competence] was the most impor –*worry* I had; that I mightn't be very good at it and wouldn't be able to keep up, even though I *knew* everyone was around my age" (Australia)

As individuals who are living with chronic health complaints and initiating an exercise program in older adulthood, these women value the freedom they perceive themselves as having in their exercise behaviour; both in their decision to pursue it and their decisions while following their exercise leader. It is important to them to not feel

pressured to comply, because they need to listen to and respect their bodies in order to avoid injury.

“Well, it’s –it’s good because *you* know when it *hurts*... so if she asked you to do a certain thing and you’re not physically able, then you don’t –she tells you *not* to do it and you wouldn’t do it if you know it’s going to hurt... cause a problem in a certain area...” (Brandy)

In Relation to Society at Large

When asked to think about how society at large values the three needs, with the exception of Brandy who placed relatedness ahead of competence and autonomy, the initiates all felt that the three needs were equally important. Though there was a lack of certainty about how they perceived society’s views on autonomy and competence, all three were steadfast in their belief that relatedness was of primary importance to people in general.

“If you *don’t* have that –you don’t *care* about other people –all you care about is getting yourself up *here* [motions with her hands to represent ‘being the top of the heap’] [taps finger on table] what kind of world are you going to have?” (Australia)

“Because we’re all together in the world!” (Laura)

“I think *everybody* wants to ... uh, have some connection to others” (Brandy)

Categorical Analysis: Reflective Maintainers

Participant Characteristics

Demographic, physical activity, and functional independence data are presented for all RM’s in Tables 1 and 2 respectively. There were 3 participants classified as reflective maintainers (RM) in this study (Simba, Mike, and Rae). The mean age of this group was 78.67 years ($SD = 3.21$) of age, all were Caucasian, and all were married except Simba who was divorced. All participants who responded to the Barthel Index (Mahoney & Barthel, 1965) were classified as functionally independent. The average

BMI score for this group was slightly lower than the average score for the initiates ($M = 27.23 \text{ kg/m}^2$; $SD = 2.31$) and Rae was the only RM who did not have a BMI score over 25.00 ($BMI_{\text{Rae}} = 24.50 \text{ kg/m}^2$).

RM's were at different stages of adherence to structured exercise. While Rae had established herself as a long term adherer, having been a regular exerciser for 12 years, Mike and Simba were re-establishing involvement in structured exercise, because both had taken a long leave of absence (six months or greater, but less than one year). Simba was the most recently re-established exerciser, having returned to her program six weeks prior to data collection and Mike had been re-established in her program for 13 months at the time of the respective interview. Two of the RM's partook regularly in the YMCA's Aquafit classes and engaged in walking for exercise during the week prior the interviews. Rae was the only RM to not walk for exercise, and Mike was the only RM to not attend Aqua Fit classes.

Mike reported the greatest energy expenditure of the three RM's (4968 kcal/week), but had the highest BMI ($BMI_{\text{Mike}} = 30.10 \text{ kg/m}^2$). Most of Mike's activity was work related, not formal exercise, and was predominantly from light intensity household activities. Simba and Rae both reported the greatest energy expenditure from vigorous physical activities (1090 kcal/week each). Overall, this group was classified as active, based on classifications used by Gilmour (2007), expending on average 6.16 kcal/kg/day via physical activity in the week leading up to their interviews.

Emergent Themes Related to Motivation and the Initiate Experience

Themes that emerged from RM interviews in relation to motivation and the initiate experience include (a) exercise being fun and feeling good, (b) becoming a role

model for others, and (c) the influence of husband exercisers and other exercise buddies. With respect to the older adult exercise experience in general, emergent themes included (a) trial memberships, (b) weather, (c) long term absences and death, (d) benefits of exercise, (e) the salience of females over time, as well as (f) time and effort commitments. Exploratory findings with regards to need thwarting, need value, and mental well-being are also reported.

“Exercise is More Than Just a Solution to an Important Problem; It’s Fun and It Feels Good!”

The health benefits associated with exercise are undeniably an important motive for this group, both when they first started exercising and even now as regular exercisers. Both Simba and Rae started exercising to help alleviate their back problems, while Mike did not actually start exercising for herself, but rather to be an exercise buddy for her husband who was prescribed walking as therapy after his second heart bypass. In all three cases, their reasons for initiating their exercise programs were personally meaningful and thus suggests that the RM’s were predominantly motivated to initiate exercise because the activity is important to them and confers valued benefits to each RM. RM’s also indicate that positive sensations such as enjoyment also motivated exercise participation. One participant (Rae) stated that while enjoyment was a motivator it was not as important to her as the health benefits of regular exercise. Unlike the initiates, however, it was not because she was expecting exercise to solve a current problem for her, but because experiencing those health benefits improves how she feels.

“Why do I exercise? Because I enjoy it! And it’s good for my health. I enjoy it and it’s good for me. Uh... because I know it’s good for my health” (Rae)

“[I exercise] because it makes me feel so much better. I really enjoy it.” (Simba)

“So that I *can* -that I don’t become ... a cripple! ... if that’s the word... personally, because I *feel* better... then it uh, reflects right through the whole of your life... you go around with a better attitude, nobody gets mad at ya... people think you’re ... happy, and you *are*! The more I do, the better I feel. (Mike)

Only one participant alluded to exercise itself becoming an important part of who she is as a person.

“I *missed* not being able to exercise, realizing that... I was losing some part of *myself*... and that was what was bothering me most” (Mike)

More internalized forms of regulation appear to be increasingly salient in the RM group compared to the IN group. Controlling forms of motivation were revealed in the RM responses, but seemed less salient. For example, Mike mentioned briefly that she enjoys the weight loss she is experiencing now that she is regularly active, and she is eager to lose more, but it is not highly important to her and the issue did not resurface at any other time during the interview. Rae sometimes feels guilty, reflecting introjected regulation, when prompted about her exercise by her husband on days when she is considering not going, but that feeling occurs infrequently, such as when there are poor weather conditions in the winter.

“Your *ego* gets in there somewhere... and uh... it’s also started me... losing weight. Which is a *big* ... experience for me and this time it’s working! And I feel very good about that. Coming here has made me realize that I want to lose some – some weight.” (Mike)

“I get a guilt feeling if I don’t go sometimes (laughs) and it... I’ll get off the chair and get busy and get going (chuckles)” (Rae)

“*There’s Something in the Water*”

Two of the three RM’s who partake in the Aqua Fit classes also felt a strong desire to be exercising in the water itself. This was not evident in the accounts by the

Aqua Fitters in the initiate group, which may suggest that the affinity developed over time for the RM's, much like Mike's sense of identity as an exerciser evolved.

"I used to go and swim every night and I used to do some exercises and stuff there –and that was fun. That was great. But I **missed it!** I missed it terribly when I was in Queenston –I'd swim in the –in the *summer*, at the pool in St. David's, but um, it closes in September, so that's when I decided to come to the Y." (Simba)

"Oh, well... that's –that's, uh ... wonderful! I love the water. I've always loved the water" (Rae)

"Three Contacts a Day Keeps the Sadness Away"

The social benefits of exercising at the YMCA emerged as a secondary motive in the RM group. Though highly valued and eagerly anticipated, the RM's felt it was still not of primary importance because it is not necessary for them to experience social contacts in order to be motivated for exercise. Social interactions appeared to be viewed as an added bonus to their exercise experience.

"I like coming to the Y, I like seeing pe – I need to get out and see people too. That's very important. There's a saying that you should see at least three con – human contacts a day, and when you're retired, sometimes you don't –and it uh, it's important" (Simba)

"I know it's good for my health... and I feel better when I've –I've been here and um... I enjoy it ... I enjoy it, and I enjoy the camaraderie ... –friends. If you're having an off day and you're just feeling a bit down in the dumps and if you came into the Y and went swi –went to Aqua Fit, I feel a lot better when I'm finished; mentally *and* physically. [It's] psychological sometimes, sometimes I –I *have* had depression and uh, it's one way to feel better –is to make myself go to the Y!" (Rae)

"I Don't Have a Role Model, I AM the Role Model!"

Inspection of RM accounts suggested that these participants were more likely to feel as though they were the role models for others, as opposed to having a role model, in their direct exercise setting. For example, Rae was the one who made the suggestion to

her daughter to join the YMCA and Mike sees how her hard work and commitment is influencing her peers on the walking track as well as her husband.

“If you *ever* walk around and look at this place, there are a lot of elderly people here that *are* doing their best and moving. There’s a gentleman that I see up on the walking thing and... *I’m* motivating *him*! Because he says to me, “How many laps did you do?” –you know? And he’s so proud, because he has worked his way up to 6... and then he sits for a little while and then he does another one... and maybe *two*, and so seeing *me* walk is giving him a –a reason to... yah.” (Mike)

“My daughter goes to the Y in London... -in London, Ontario. *I* was the one that suggested she go to the Y” (Rae)

There are two friends in Simba’s life who act as indirect role models in her exercise behaviour. They do not exercise with her, nor do they do so in her exercise community (the YMCA), rather she is aware of their exercise behaviour and finds their stories inspiring. One lady who she regarded as a role model was in her Aqua Fit class, but she was more of a role model in aging than exercise for her.

“They’re role models and *friends*, yeah. Yes, we talk about things –and it’s inspiring to hear about what *they* have done sometimes”

“I can think of one lady, now she’s ... I think she’s probably about 85, but she’s just abso –she came to the Y a few times last year. She’s moved now to Toronto and she’s not -she’s living in a –in a home because her back, you know, she’s 85 –she’s getting older. And, but she’s just so *straight* and so marvelous and so cheerful and just, you know, a real role model. And, uh, I just -you know, people like *that* motivate you.” (Simba)

“My Husband is An Exerciser Too”

With the exception of Simba, who is divorced, the husbands of the RM’s are highly visible in their exercise behaviour. For Mike, her husband is a walking buddy with whom she challenges herself by trying to keep up with him. Rae does not exercise with her husband, as he does not attend the Aqua Fit classes, but they both have memberships to the YMCA and pursue independent exercise programs. Though not a direct source of motivation or support during their exercise, they both are supportive of each other’s

exercise commitments outside of the exercise environment. For instance, Rae's husband is keen to ask her if she is "going to the Y today?" when he notices that she has not been preparing to leave.

"One thing is –I have to keep up with my husband... he's a walker and uh... so this helps motivate me too. It's *good*. For one thing, it gives us something to *talk* about" (Mike)

"My husband says the best thing I ever did ... was coming to the Y... because uh, uh... I guess I was so much *happier* and uh... I *felt* better. We don't come together. He comes and does his thing upstairs and I... I do mine in the water. He enjoys doing what *he's* doing, and I enjoy what *I'm* doing (chuckles). *Actually*, my husband does encourage me sometimes... he says "aren't you going to the Y? ... *today*?" Sometimes I think "well, I won't bother going out; the weather's miserable" and then my husband will say: "aren't you going to the Y today?" He's much better... motivated than I am, I think. I need a little encouragement sometimes (laughs) if the weather's not good. It's the male in him, I guess (laughs) ... I think men are more go-go, as far as not worrying about the weather or something like that." (Rae)

The 'Cafeteria Club' and Other Exercise Buddies

Friends emerged as important people in the RM's exercise experiences and motivation. Rae's social experience at the YMCA is particularly noteworthy, as she has been attending the same class for 12 years and over time has found herself fused into what the primary investigator came to know as the Cafeteria Club. The Cafeteria Club is a group of Aqua Fit participants, all female, who the investigator noticed were meeting in the cafeteria before and after every Aqua Fit class they attended. What was more intriguing was the fact that Club members who were not exercising that day (either due to illness, or in the case of Rae, healing from surgery) still showed up to spend time with the group. Unlike other participants and the friends they meet through exercise, it is not uncommon for Club members to meet up together outside of the YMCA as well. The only other participant considering such a move is Mike, also a RM.

“They just came because they’re not able to... go in the water right now, but they still *belong*! They still belong ... to the Y. They come just to get together. It’s the nice social part of it.” (Rae)

“Well, I -I *do*, uh, take pills for depression... I (clears throat) and um... I find if I’m with people I feel, uh, I feel a lot better. There’s always a little group of people at the Y, when I came and uh, we did have coffee after... and talk about our *days* and what’s going on... and you feel better then... Yes, the people -we’ve had *close* association with each other and... other than the Y, and might go out to lunch together –the group of us... we have coffee together and, uh, it’s been enjoyable. We’re all about the same age category, so we have a lot of things to talk about –and we’ve gone out together and uh, once when it was someone’s birthday and remember to bring a card and have a little –some nice... -bring a cake or.. so it’s a -sort of a nice association. That’s someone you wouldn’t have met unless you’d come here. It’s quite nice. It means *a lot*. Unfortunately... we’re all getting *older*, so there aren’t as many of us!” (Rae)

“Not –well, *here*: **one** ... uh, yes... there is a wo –woman and her husband. He swims and she walks and does exercises, and we *do* sit and chat... *actually*, there’s 3 or 4 people that uh, we... uh –haven’t taken it any farther than seeing each other *here*, yah. So uh, I’ve been thinking –I’ve discovered that they like to play Euchre and I love that game too, so I’m *seriously* thinking of taking the... *friendship* just a little further, asking them over, yah” (Mike)

While the prospect of interacting with friends at the YMCA may be an uplifting influence for RM’s, when it comes to physically doing the exercise, none of the RM’s feel that their friends in exercise really have a bearing on their motivation once the exercise has begun (with the exception of Mike’s husband while walking) because they consider it to be a very individual experience.

“It’s an individual thing... it’s your *own* thing ... that you’re in the water. It doesn’t depend on anybody else –what they’re doing. They may not be able to do what -what you do, or you may not be able to do what they can do. So, you just do what your body ... *allows* you to do. It’s just the way I think, uh ... I do what *I* can do, and they do what *they* can do and they may be able to do *more* than you can, but uh ... I think it makes you feel better when you come out of the water, no matter *what* you do in the water in exercise form.” (Rae)

“I don’t think anybody else really has, it’s... things that –*thoughts* that go through your own head that you get off your rear end and get moving. That’s about it. Yah...” (Mike)

“Oh! I like to see some of [my Aqua Fit classmates] yeah, it’s great –it’s nice. You know, it takes a while, but you get to be friends after a while, you see them - you notice when they’re not there.” (Simba)

Reflecting on the Older Adult Exercise Experience

Getting Started: Trial Memberships

Mike noted that receiving a trial membership from her niece and nephew had also been an important catalyst in her action toward reinstating herself as an exerciser. Though Rae was not recruited to the YMCA via trial membership, she is aware that they are available and suspects that is why some people only show up to her Aqua Fit class once or twice before disappearing.

“*Well*, when I fell and broke my arm, that was a *real ... year* of trauma for me... and then I realized, “Hey! I gotta do somethin’” and ... that was when Fate stepped in and my niece gave me the card to come to this place and here I’ve been started back... I walked in and as soon as –I *just* came in the door... in the lobby, I knew we were going to be *here*. I signed up that day for the membership and I wouldn’t give it up. Yes, it got me to *come* here and check the place out. I didn’t use it that first day, but I knew I was going to and that’s why I signed up. My husband was all “Well, well, well, *you know*”. I said “You can come if you want, you don’t need to” (laughs) but uh, I knew *I* was going to do it.” (Mike)

“There *are* people come –that only come once and then you never see them again, so you don’t know ... you know... whether they’re interested in joining your class or if they’re just coming to see what it’s *like*, or ... I think they’ve had a few of those this uh... year, I think they did give out some gift certificates -trial passes. Mhmmm.” (Rae)

Weather

All of the RM’s indicated that poor weather conditions, particularly in the winter, are major barriers to their exercise participation. The YMCA has been helpful for them, however, for as long as they are able to transport themselves to the facility, the shelter of the building provides a safe environment for them to perform their exercise to the extent that they desire.

“Thank goodness I had the *area* [the YMCA] that I could come to. ‘Cause if –if I didn’t have *this*, where would I be? You can’t walk outside in the winter... at least *I* can’t ... not -not to *walk* the way I want to. So, if I didn’t have this place, I wouldn’t be where I am today.” (Mike)

“The days when I’m out there and the weather’s not nice, it’s snowing, [I think] “do I really want to go out today?” (giggles), and if my husband hasn’t shovelled... the driveway... I don’t go, you know, I don’t go start cleaning the car off and –if I were younger I would. [It’s] more to do with *age* related, than not wanting to go” (Rae)

Dealing with Long Term Absences and Death

Themes surrounding the notion of long term absence due to injury or illness were more prevalent in the RM group and expanded to include permanent absences such as death. RM’s appeared to be more emotionally involved in the experience of losing their classmates, temporarily or otherwise, than members of the IN group.

“The odd thing is –it’s rather a sad thing... uh, over the years there’ve been people that I’ve really... -were quite fun and um, but they just don’t come back and you realize ... I don’t know... -you don’t usually know their last name or anything so you’re not in touch with them, but this one lady I did contact, and uh –she’d had a heart attack and ... you know, and others go off and they’re into ... they’re into homes, and so... it is sad. But you don’t, -but there’s some that are just marvelous and just keep coming and keep coming and they’re in their 80s and... it’s amazing” (Simba)

“I have visited a lady that used to come to our Aqua class and who was 90 years old and uh, I missed her a lot, ‘cause I used to bring her into the Y and um... yeah... we all missed her. I missed terribly, mhmhm. She was such a –she was *always... positive* and... looking outwards, you know? Yeah... [Rae becomes a bit emotional, with tears welling up in her eyes] everybody thought she was just a great person, you know, and she was -never *down*. She was always so *outward* looking and ... never complained! She was an influence on you... thinking, “Well, don’t worry about your little problems!” (laughs) (Rae)

“*Well*, you just *do* (chuckles) [get through it emotionally] because we all gotta go sometime... and if somebody’s in uh... having a lot of *pain*, or something, you don’t wish them to be here longer, you know? But uh... we seem to manage and *try* and keep in touch –you *do* lose touch with people once they stop coming to the class though, um... one reason or another... you just looked forward to seeing them when they came to the class all the time and they may be going somewhere else, or they’re unable, they’ve moved, or died, or -or whatever.” (Rae)

Reaping the Benefits of Regular Exercise

Both physical and psychological benefits attributable to exercise participation were reported by the RM group, especially reductions in pain, blood pressure, and weight loss, as well as improvements in mobility, confidence, and general attitude.

“It gives you *confidence*... you know, if you can do something well and uh... if you come and your joints are all hurting and uh... after you’ve come to the Y for a while and do –do the classes um, you find that you can *move* better, you know... and you can get *around* better and *do* things that maybe you hadn’t been able to do for a while. It’s good for the *mental* part to ... uh, to be doing something physical, because you’re able to forget all ... your aches and pains.” (Rae)

“*Mentally*, my whole attitude has changed. One thing is helping with another... coming here has made me realize that I want to lose some –some weight... um, health-wise I brought my uh... high blood pressure down ... *fantastically* –there *again* is a good point! And uh... so the whole thing is like a big circle... one thing helps with another and eventually everything helps ... at least that’s what *I’m* seeing.” (Mike)

“It’s been great! ... I’m sure it’s improved the quality of life very much. I’m quite sure it has... because, yeah, it just *does* – because you need to be active, and when you’re active you feel better.” (Simba)

Being Female and How Times Have Changed

While Rae and Simba felt that being female has not influenced their exercise behaviour, they both recognize that times have changed and that it was not always as common for females to be actively involved in exercise as it is today. Mike, on the other hand, believes that women want to look good in their clothes and that exercise is one way of achieving the weight loss that may help them in this endeavour.

“*Yes*... it *does*. Because you want to look good... you want to be able to... wear nice clothes... you want people that you haven’t seen in 40-some years to say, “Oh, Gee! *She* aged well!” ... you know, um... your *ego* gets in there somewhere... and uh... it’s also started me... losing weight. Which is a *big* ... experience for me and this time it’s working! And I feel very good about that” (Mike)

“Not in my teen years. No, it wasn’t [socially accepted]. That was **not** something girls *did*” (Mike)

“*Today* you can be female, you can be male, you can do all these things ... it might have been [a draw back] years *ago*. I mean it’s just –just because, uh, for instance -back to my mother again –she never exercised. But it was ... it -it would have been completely, it -it was very accepted then. She wasn’t expected to. Whereas perhaps it would be less unusual for a man ... you know -to -not be involved in exercise of some kind.” (Simba)

“Times *have* changed. Um, I don’t think the –the YMCA had ladies in the class when I was young, it was strictly a *men’s* YMCA ... and it was strictly for *men*. But there *was* a YWCA, so that’s why I belonged to the YWCA. I did go swimming the odd time I got involved, but really didn’t go to a *class* ... and um... it was... during the *war*... the end of the war, that I was going to the classes and they used to have a lot of military people come and dance, so it was more of a social thing and it would be an evening thing” (Rae)

Time vs. Effort

With Mike being a newly re-established exerciser, it is not surprising that the data implied a greater commitment towards effort in her interview compared to the others. Because Mike had previously attained a certain level of physical fitness and well-being prior to embarking on her long term absence, she has a keen desire to bring herself back to that level as soon as possible (in a safe, but challenging manner). All of the RM’s, however, were keen to *make* time for their exercise programs, especially if they missed a class, and would sometimes incorporate extra sessions into a given week.

“Losing a bit of weight has brought my blood pressure down... I’m walking *more*... I’m feeling like I can *do* more... I’m *anxious* to do more... and see how much more I can accomplish and I think as ... a person, you have to have *goals*. I don’t care *how old* you are... and if you give up having goals (scoffs)... you’re just a nothing. You really are... Last week um... when we didn’t come on Wednesday because of the bad storm there, I came *Thursday* because I was bound I was gonna have my three days! My *husband* didn’t come ... on Thursday, I did... and I walked over to [the] mall to meet him for a ride home. Yah... so... I think I’m really motivated. I really *do*.” (Mike)

“I’ve arranged it so that it’s not –I can get a lot of things done in the morning and then when I get here –I’m downtown here, I can do a bit of shopping. It all works out quite nicely. I could just come for the Aqua Fit, but I *want* to come more. I want to do the walking. I think it’s nice to have a warm up and I –I believe in walking. I think -I have varicose veins and it’s important to walk and um ... and

then I—I—I need to do my yoga stretches. I *love* to do that ... and I, you know—no, I guess I am increasing it because I want to. Nobody's told me to do all that at all. I just decided to do it." (Simba)

"Uh...well, sometimes I think: "well, I don't want—I don't wanna go here, or do *this*, because it's my Y day" So, I always set that aside for our progr—our exercise program. So, it's important. It *is* a priority. To *me* it's a priority, you know, my husband too, like I said, you know, he's hooked *too* (chuckles) ... so that's pretty good for people that are in their eighties, I think!" (Rae)

Even the most motivated of individuals gravitate towards sedentariness on occasion. On such days, the RM's instigate action by reminding themselves to "Get up!" because exercise is an important part of their lives.

"Sometimes it's a *big* effort, because it would be so nice to just close your eyes and go to sleep but *that* can be a *habit* ... I am not going to let that get into my life. It's not something I'm *going* to give up... and therefore, if I'm *not* going to give up, then I've got to keep going... and... it's kinda convoluted in a way, but that's the way I'm *thinkin'*. However many years I've got left, I'll be here truckin' away!" (Mike)

"I—I—I ... don't *always* want to rush off in the morning and come here. But I - I try and make myself... and I'm *always* very glad I did, you know, when you do." (Simba)

"I like to come on a regular basis. I think it does your body... uh, it's more advantageous to come on a *regular* basis than once in a while." (Rae)

In reflecting upon their initiate experiences, Mike and Rae recall having had more motivational struggles in the past because of pain and, for Mike, adjusting to living in a new city.

"It was more challenging *mentally* 'cause I was getting over my *arm*, moving um... trying to find my way around... get back with some of the uh, *family*—extended family and uh... just a lot of things, but I didn't stop coming every three—every other day. I still did it -as a matter of fact, um, I quite often would come on a Saturday and make it a *fourth* day" (Mike)

"Oh yes! [I had problems motivating myself] You talk yourself into it (says with a laugh). Well, I'd done so many exercises—floor exercises at home. I guess they did *some* good, but I feel the water really did a lot ... uh, helped me a lot more. I did my exercise from the deeper part of the -not the *deep end*, but—*stand*, like into

my chest in the water when I did my exercises ... and, I always felt better when I got out of the water” (Rae)

Other RM's were less concerned with increasing the effort they expend, as opposed to time they invest, in exercise, because as older adults they feel they need to listen to their bodies in order to have an enjoyable experience and prevent potential injuries that may send them to the doctor.

“Well, I'm moderate in everything (says with a smile). I could put more effort in. I *could* put more effort in. I could push myself, but I don't see much point. I –I –I like what I'm doing and I don't want to ... -I think you have to be a little bit gentle with yourself when you're this age, uh, you know ... you push yourself too much and you're going to run into trouble. I believe very much in –you learn this in yoga –you, you uh, listen to your body and you *don't* push yourself.” (Simba)

“*Well*, I always feel that I do what I can in the class... physically. I just do my regular thing (chuckles) because I –I –I just don't think that when you get *older* your joints are as flexible and... you have to do what your body tells you ... and uh ... *do* the best you can! If you have any joint problems, you have to be careful when you get older... that you don't do something that's gonna –going to, uh... send you to the *doctor*! (laughs)” (Rae)

Psychological Need Salience in Life in General and Exercise Experience

Autonomy? That's Important!

Married RM's felt mostly in charge of their decisions and behaviours, while Simba (who is divorced) felt almost entirely in charge across life domains. For Mike, in the past, she had to prove to her husband that she was capable of thinking and making decisions. A theme that arose in both circumstances was the idea of being responsible for others impacting one's volition and well-being.

“*Well*... I have a big say in any of our decisions. That's the way we've always been –no, not *always*. It took a while for me to uh... get him to realize I have a brain... and I can think as well as *he* can. Um... I think I do very well; I manage for *both* of us, because he... had a seizure and it... has... um... caused his memory –his daily memory ... not to be that great. I've gotta think for both of us. It isn't *bothering* me ... it's put a little *pressure*, but I think that's good for me, because uh, this makes *my* brain have to work as well as my body, so that's not a problem. Sometimes even *I* lose my patience a little and this bothers me... I just

hope it doesn't get any worse I don't think it *will*, but um... (sighs) it's a worry, it's a worry, you know?" (Mike)

"I *am*, totally... almost totally. I mean, I'm certainly influenced by others that I'm responsible for ... and uh, *that* makes a difference, but uh ... no, I'm in charge. Nobody is uh, managing *me*. I make *all* my decisions myself. Well, I'm separated (laughs), *that's* why. It's great. I don't feel *vulnerable* ... to others ... pushing me around and telling me what to do. I don't—I don't think, uh, at -at my age I've learned that, you know, I just don't have to do it! I'm not a little kid anymore." (Simba)

"My husband isn't controlling. [He] *does* make *some* decisions, but uh... we—we always *talk* to each other about it ... he doesn't make decisions about... money matters or anything like that without talking to me about it" (Rae)

The importance of support for and/or from others emerged in Simba and Mike's interviews when discussing their relationships to their children.

"And I think the one *big* thing about—their father's always been there for help... to *know* how to do things... and *I* have not been an interfering mother-in-law and I think *that* is very big. I'm *there*... but I don't try to put *my* viewpoint over on something that doesn't involve me. That's *their* family. *They* have to look after them, but I'm *there* -Hey! *I'm Gram!* (laughs)" (Mike)

"You don't want to—you don't want to involve your family too much. You can't ... no, you can't, uh - it's a fine line there... you can't use *them* for your ... social life. I don't really want to ... but, uh, you know, yeah, it's—we're very close. I have wonderful girls and I'm in touch with them all the time, but I don't live with them. I'm not going to do *that*. They need me to be independent." (Simba)

In the context of exercise, all three RM's felt completely in control of their exercise behaviour, because they feel that ultimately no one else can make it happen for them.

"Well, there's ... it's totally up to *me*. If I want to stay home and stay in bed all day, I can do that. But I don't want to. So, it's up to me to decide. I can be encouraged by some good teacher or something that, uh, you know, I -it depends on who we have in Aqua Fit." (Simba)

"Because I'm the only one that can... make my body *do* what I want it to do ... and uh, as long as I can keep tellin' it to get going, I'll keep doin' it. If I don't *want* to ... I wouldn't be doing it. So, my *wanting to* is there. That's what's motivating me ... and hopefully it'll keep on" (Mike)

“I *am* in charge... it’s up to *me* (chuckles) -to do it! (laughs) Sometimes if I –as I said, if I decide I might lay *low* one day, my husband will say: “aren’t you going to the Y today?” so, he’s an *influence* on me. Sometimes he influences – influences me in thinking – I get the guilt feeling that I *must* go (laughs)” (Rae)

Sharing the Decision Making

There was a mixed response to the idea of handing over control to others in life domains. While Simba is open to other people’s suggestions and input, she feels that ultimately it is she that is going to make final decisions. Mike is not keen to do so because she is still capable of making her own decisions and would not want others having that power over her and Rae, regretful for having always given her husband complete control over managing the finances in the past, is anxious about her future and her incompetence for taking over when he passes away.

“Because, any... thing that would be like that... would affect *me* and ... I don’t want somebody else... making important decisions *for* me. I’m still capable of thinking... no, I don’t want anybody else making... not even my husband... other than, he can decide sometimes where we’re going out to *eat*, but you know (laughs).” (Mike)

“I don’t *mind* other people making certain decisions and *helping* me with decisions. In the end, it’s going to be *me* that decides, but I’ll certainly welcome help of all kinds -sure. I love other people’s ideas and ... everything, it’s great! When I was changing a lot of things to my house uh ... I loved to get ideas from everybody and then I’d just choose, you know, then *I* decided what -what’s going to work best for me and –and uh, that’s good. It worked out well, anyway.” (Simba)

“I wish I knew *more* about money matters –*that* bothers me -that I don’t –I haven’t... it’s partly my own fault... it’s *easier* for someone else to do it (chuckles).” (Rae)

While handing over control in general appeared to be more problematic for the group, in the context of exercise the RM’s were quite happy and willing to share the decision making with knowledgeable leaders such as a personal trainer or class instructor, because they believe that it will help them achieve their goals. In the end, however, none

felt as though they were required to follow their leader's instruction if they did not want to, or if they needed to make modifications to accommodate their physical condition.

"Nina was helping me –*supporting* me, shall we say, but I was still the one saying, "Yes, I can do that"... or "No, I don't want to do that. The one thing that she wanted me to do was to –um, do computers –you know? Everything you did, you put it in the computer... and I said, "No, I don't want *that*. I can't be bothered with it. I know I can do this myself. I don't need a computer to say, "Oh hey! You did *that*". So uh, I –I didn't do the computer part of it." (Mike)

"Oh, I don't mind at all. If -if I feel they know what they're doing. But if I don't ... well that's alright, because I won't do it." (Simba)

"Well, just -if somebody's teaching our class, I guess they're in *control* of it -so it doesn't bother me a bit! (laughs) Because that's what they're there for! They have to instruct us what to do... for our *bodies* to make them *better*. If I feel I'm not *able* to do it, I just don't *do* whatever certain thing is that I think might, uh, *not* be for *me*. I know when something would be *hurting*, so I wouldn't *do* that. I just go at my own pace –I think that's what you have to do... everybody has their own... *pace* that they uh, can exercise at." (Rae)

In the case of Mike, this sense of acceptance in handing over control may have also been fostered through the knowledge that her time with her personal trainer was temporary.

"No, I knew it was only a temporary thing, because I was a new member of the – of the thing, which was a *great* thing. And I'm sure they do this with other people too..." (Mike)

Succeeding in the Face of Challenge

The RM's reported feeling generally confident in their abilities to master the tasks they intended to accomplish, particularly in the realm of day to day life and house keeping.

"I don't think my *mental* confidence is as good as it used to be. I find my memory's not as good as it used to be. So, that sort of bothers me, but uh, I guess a lot of people get that way when they get older. I'm still very confident, even though I *can't* do the things I used to do! (laughs) I *think* I can still do those things –sometimes... –make the effort –gardening or –or things like that, that I –I'm aware *now* that I'm not as ... *agile* as I used to be. Let's put it that way. I'm fine

with home-making, but uh, I just –because of my *physical* condition I can't do *as much* as I used to do.” (Rae)

“Keeping track of our daily... appointments... um... *payments*... that sort of thing –my husband... sort of loses a little bit... so I'm the -the *tracker* of the family... um, so I have to keep my brain alert and focused on what each day should be doing –what we should be doing.” (Mike)

“Well, I feel most confident when I'm *physically* well and ... and emotiona -nice and even, not stressed.” (Simba)

This group of RM's reported feeling very confident in their abilities to exercise and overcome challenges, either because they are convinced that they will achieve their goals, or because they know they will avoid injury by listening to their bodies.

“I'm *proud* ... that I've accomplished that. That I can *do* twelve laps... and the other day I added two more, but I took a little rest in between, and so now my new goal is to do 14 laps without stopping... and I hope I'll – I *know* I will accomplish it and I'm shooting for doing two miles –that's my big goal. I don't know *when*, but it'll happen (says with a chuckle).” (Mike)

“Oh! Fine... because I *do* do what my body... tells me to do in the –and like, if I can't do something I *just* don't *do* it but I do what I *can* do.” (Rae)

The RM's, however, declared that they were less 'confident' during their days as initiate exercisers. Mike, as an initiate returning to exercise was “determined”, while Rae (who was starting for the first time) was “cautious”, but comfortable because she started in a low intensity class.

“I couldn't say *confident*. All I can say is I was *determined*... uh... I didn't have any particular *goal*... I was going to walk until I was too tired... and it's taken me this time to do it –to walk that way... um... I just keep going, that's all. Yah. I'm *going* to do it. *That* I know... *when* it'll *happen* when I get the two miles in, I'm hoping it will be by the end of this year and uh... we'll go from there again.” (Mike)

“I think when I first started exercising I was a lot more *cautious*, but um... I found that it did -made me feel *a lot* better... so... and... the class that I took was not ... a difficult class anyway, it was for people that had ... joint problems, or whatever, Aqua Fit in Moderation.” (Rae)

Though the low intensity class helped Rae in her transition to becoming an established exerciser, she has no desire to start challenging herself with higher intensity classes because she believes that they are more risky for her at this stage in the game.

“Uh...well, it would *now* [be intimidating] (laughs) that my *age* category, because it –it’s a lot uh ... more difficult *moving* program, so... I don’t think it would be suited to ... me now. You *can* [go at your own pace] if you choose to... but, um, I’d rather be in that other class which is doing... getting a *benefit* from it... doing the exercise program. You don’t want something that’s gonna -going to make your joints *worse*.” (Rae)

Meaningful Connections are a Bonus

The RM’s feel connected to others in their life generally, especially to their husbands, children, and friends. One particular struggle in maintaining a strong bond with others in advanced age was noted by Rae, in that as she grows older, many of those connections are lost as people pass away.

“[Our children are] always interested... uh, two of our children live away from us and there isn’t two days goes by that they don’t get in touch. “How are ya? What are you doing?” you know? I think we’re very lucky and somehow we did something right because our kids like to keep in touch with us. Our middle son, he uh, just sold his place in Toronto. He told me when he was selling this house -he says, “Whatever I buy Mum,” he says, “there’ll be a bedroom for you and Dad” (laughs). So, I think our kids are ... terrific!” (Mike)

“Well, I certainly feel a very strong connection with family; very much so... and with my work, I mean, I love – I go to art classes and stuff and -and I just *love* it. I get along beautifully with everybody because we all have the same interests and we –y – we’re all sort of the same types. I’m sure you would find the same thing with people who are interested in sports and exercise and all that stuff. You’ve all got something to talk about.” (Simba)

“I have *friends*, but I haven’t got as many friends as I used to have (chuckles)... they keep *dying* on me! (laughs) I find *that* hard –losing friends... and you don’t have -really have any control over *that*! It makes me feel... lonely at times, that these friends are gone... as you get older, you don’t acquire the same friendships... as you do when you’re younger. At a certain stage of life, I think uh, you don’t look forward to going maybe into a senior’s residence or something like that” (Rae)

The RM's have many people to whom they feel connected to in exercise contexts, exemplified by members of the Cafeteria Club, classmates, and/or husbands.

"Oh! I like to see some of [my Aqua Fit classmates] yeah, it's great –it's nice. You know, it takes a while, but you get to be friends after a while, you see them - you notice when they're not there." (Simba)

"Yes, the people -we've had *close* association with each other and... other than the Y, and might go out to lunch together –the group of us... we have coffee together and, uh, it's been enjoyable." (Rae)

"*Here: one* ... uh, yes... there is a wo –woman and her husband. He swims and she walks and does exercises, and we *do* sit and chat... *actually*, there's 3 or 4 people" (Mike)

The target of these social connections noted by the RM group in exercise, however, are not always members of the YMCA. For instance, Mike is still in touch with the people she used to walk with at Variety Village in Toronto and Simba has two good friends who are exercisers; one lives in the USA and the other lives in the area but is not a member.

"Yah, I have two friends and one of them's a yoga teacher ... and she's a very, very good friend of mine. She's in [the States] right now, she just moved out there ... and then I have another friend who, unfortunately, is going around with a walker right now, but... um, she's a great exerci –she's quite amazing." (Simba)

"Not really [connected to people at the YMCA]... other than people I see every day at the track and you just sort of chat a little bit or -as you're walking by or whatever, but uh... some of the people in Toronto uh, they still phone me... to see how I'm doing -they're still going to uh... uh, Variety Village." (Mike)

Exploratory Findings

Mental Well-Being

In general, the RM's perceived their mental well-being as "Good!" (Rae) to "Very good" (Mike) and that exercise has helped them in that regard.

"Very good. Um... the sort of *fuzzy* feeling is gone... because I'm exercising... and I *honestly* think –and uh, this is a thought I've had for a *long* time, that people

who have... *depression* ... if they got off their *ass* and got moving and got their blood flowing, it's *bound* to help!" (Mike)

"Pretty good. Well, I mean, everybody has their ups and downs, but ...I'm not ... in a depressive state very much." (Simba)

The RM's reported feeling "quite happy" (Simba) and "good" (Rae) while exercising. For Rae and Simba, who exercise in classes (which involves watching for the instructor's next move), the required amount of focus involved in their exercise is able to function as a distraction from their day to day problems. It was this focus that also caused Simba to feel unsure when reflecting on her mental well-being during exercise, as was the case for Australia in the initiate group, because when focused on the task and one's body there is little time to be thinking about how one is feeling psychologically. Mike, on the other hand, who participates in continuous movement exercise (walking) has more opportunity to think about how she is feeling and what is going on around her because the amount of concentration required to walk around a track is minimal compared to an exercise class.

"I guess I'm fine. I don't think about it –I'm fine, quite happy." (Simba)

"I don't think too much while I'm exercising (laughs). I just enjoy the moment. If you have health problems you forget about them when you're in the water and exercising. Uh, because you're with other *people* and, uh, I don't talk about my problems when I... am *here* and uh... so... it –it just –enjoy being with *friends* and -and doing the *exercises*, which I know help me. Your mind isn't on your *self* when you're in the water doing exercises, you're ... you're following a *program* and so your mind is somewhere else." (Rae)

"Well, for one thing, I'm *counting* the laps as I do them... and I'm feeling better each time I say, "Oh gee! I've only got 7 more to go!" or somethin' like *that*, you know? And uh... I'm not always *completely* focused on what I'm doing, I uh... I have strange thoughts running through my head, you know: "Oh, maybe when I go home I'll do so-and-so" or whatever... you know how you are your mind just ... travels on its own, yah... but, I do feel that I *am in* ... control of myself as I am doing this in my own way. Yah. I notice people passing me –'cause they *do* pass me uh... I guess you can't help hearing some conversations... I see some

handicapped people that come in and uh, they have somebody with them –helping them and I think, “Aren’t I lucky” “that I can still move myself?” and uh... it’s just... a nice experience each day.” (Mike)

For Mike, who is actively challenging herself to retain her former level of fitness, there are occasions when she is relieved that the hard work is over, but she still feels good about it. Rae believes that when she first started she did feel better after exercising, but that it took a while for her to feel as good as she does now, because the program had to prove itself to her.

“*Some days* it’s “Wow! Is that ever glad –am I ever glad that’s over!” (chuckles) You’re feeling good, but you’re ... some days it’s a *chore*... and... it would be so easy to... say “Forget it!”, but I *won’t*. But I can’t help feeling, “Boy am I ever glad *that’s* over today!” But then I come back the next time and, “Hey! It just feels great. It’s like, “*Oh!* That felt so good!” –you know?” (Mike)

“Afterwards, I feel good. I usually feel a little better. You feel a little bit taller, a little bit cleaner, a little bit –just better. It’s not *euphoric* or anything like that, quite. But it’s just -you feel quite fine and *glad* that you did it –it’s all been worth while” (Simba)

“Oh, I always feel better. When I first started I didn’t really know anyone, I didn’t know whether this program was going to help me or not... ‘cause I’d been to *umpteens* doctors with my *back* and my *joints* ... and uh ... so, it had to prove itself, I guess and I continued on ... so... I *think* [it made me feel better afterwards]... it’s hard to remember that far back (laughs). Um... ya, I think I feel better, or I wouldn’t have kept coming.” (Rae)

When discussing their most recent bout of exercise, none of the RM’s perceived the satisfaction of their needs to be thwarted as a result of their exercise experience that day. Rather, they generally felt more connected to others after exercising than before they came in, while their feelings of effectance and volition remained stable. The one exception was Simba, who in the morning felt “incapable” in her abilities, but felt “probably more” capable after exercising. In general, if a given need’s satisfaction appeared to be low in the morning, it seemed to be improved after exercising. If the

need's satisfaction appeared to be satisfactory or high, however, it was more likely to remain stable.

"Well, there was nobody to feel connected *to*! (says with a laugh) Um... well, I ... I—I live on my own, so ... and I don't even have my cat anymore. Poor old thing got a lung tumor and had to be put down last year. It was very sad" (Simba – Before Class)

"Oh sure! In class I do [feel connected to others], yeah... and then there's a couple people upstairs that I've got to know that are, you know ... walk together sometimes—sometimes don't. Yeah... so there's a couple of people that I ... they're there sometimes, sometimes they're *not*. But it's always nice to see them." (Simba- After Class)

Psychological Need Thwarting

None of the RM's felt they would be significantly negatively impacted if, on a good day, their exercise performance was not as strong as usual. Rather, they would tell themselves that they would do better during their next session and move on with their day.

"It would just make me say, "You're gonna do it... the next day when you come!" I might even think, "Put an extra day *in*!" you know? And I'm not *kidding* about that, I—I really mean it. My feelings are that I came, I did... *what* I could do. So okay, maybe I'll do better next day ... but I *came* and I *did* and *that's* what I *want* to do." (Mike)

"Doesn't bother me at all, because I have *no* technique! I just *do* my exercise, you know, and there's nothing challenging -very challenging about it. I'm not—I'm not playing *tennis*, I'm not trying to *win*, I'm not trying to do anything, I'm not trying to learn to dive or anything like that. I'm just walking around, stretching, and swim—and doing what I'm told in the exercise class, but another, you know - some days are a little better than others, it's *not* a big deal." (Simba)

"*No*... that doesn't bother me. No. Well, I've been coming here so long that I know *some* days you're not going to feel as good as others... and uh, you just accept that. (Rae)

Reflecting on their initiate experiences, Mike and Rae felt that their approach to moving past undesirable performance would have been different, in that they may have

felt they should have modified their plan that day, or they would experience some frustration because they were not improving as quickly as they would have liked to.

“[When I first came back] I probably would have said, “Well maybe I needed to take a little more of a break and *then* go back and do a bit more” or *something*, but uh... I would *still* have thought, “Well I *came* and I *did* what I could do”. “I *came*” –*that’s* the important thing. I’d be happy that I came... but I’d be pushing for the next time when I came. yah.” (Mike)

“I don’t think so. It was so long ago, I can’t remember, but I don’t think so... I was thinking: “Why isn’t this getting better faster?” (laughs) I think I always did *just* what I could *do* ... and didn’t worry about –if I couldn’t do something, well then I didn’t *do* it, that’s all. There’s no point in punishing your body... ‘cause you’re not able to *do* something. Or, you know... had to do something that’s going to make your ... *worse* when you came out, than better (chuckles).” (Rae)

If on a good day the RM’s’ sense of volition in exercise is being compromised, it does not generally bother them, especially Rae and Simba who are in the exercise classes. Because an instructor has to try and reach out to all participants in the class, Rae recognizes that not all of the instruction is being directed at her and so if her instructor is acting more demanding on a given day, she does not take it personally. Mike, on the other hand, who is completely guided by herself in her exercise behaviour, becomes a little annoyed when other people interfere during her walking sessions.

“I’d probably get a little annoyed... like, sometimes you’re held up with somebody else on the track uh... I don’t know what –it um... I don’t think I’d be *that* –I’d be *upset*, but I just keep goin’. Yah. Then you might think, “Oh! Those asses!” you know? (laughs). Yah, it isn’t –it isn’t a big thing.” (Mike)

“It’s just not important ... I mean, uh, the -the exercising is just ... it’s not *work*. It’s not something I’m *pushing* at. It’s something I’m just doing, and I enjoy it.” (Simba)

“It wouldn’t bother me, *really*. No. You gotta look on the positive side, not the negative side. There’s nothing -I don’t think there’s anything really *personal* related ... in those classes... you do what you’re *able* to do and the best you can do and they don’t seem to expect any more than that. You’re not doing it on an individual basis.” (Rae)

Though all of the RM's enjoyed the camaraderie of their friends in exercise, it would not affect their sense of well-being if those friends did not show up to exercise if they were having a mentally good day because they come for themselves, not the others.

"No, it wouldn't bother me, because everybody uh, doesn't come as faithfully as I do and uh... so it really wouldn't bother me. *I came, I did what I was doing... I'm finished, I'm going home.*" (Mike)

"That's ... not –not uh, not going to make any difference really." (Simba)

"[It] doesn't bother me (chuckles) I come for *me*, really." (Rae)

Perceived Importance of the Three Needs

As a Person

A tabular depiction of the need value responses can be found in Tables 4 through 6. When thinking about themselves as people, the RM's generally felt that volition was of primary importance to them, followed by effectance which was unanimously deemed secondary. Connection to others, however, was placed in all three positions of importance and may be due to some confusion in what they thought the question was asking. For instance, Mike, who has very strong connections to her family, claims that those connections "really aren't that important" to her as a person, but is actually referring to their influence on her motivation.

"Well, yes as far as being in control of your decisions and behaviours that would be number 1, 'cause I don't want ... *strangers* making decisions for me, unless I *have* to! (laughs) I think *everyone* should be in charge of –being in control of your own decisions and not be influenced by others. There would be a lot more kids... not get -not getting in trouble if they were in control of their decisions (chuckles) ..." (Rae)

"By being in control of *my* decisions and behaviours, that gives me *confidence*... and makes me more *able* to... function...and other people aren't going to ... change that..." (Mike)

An interesting point raised by Simba, was that, for her, relatedness is of primary importance because it is something that is obtained when authentic connections to others are reciprocated. Thus, if a sense of relatedness is dependent upon another individual, it can be actively sought, but not actively fulfilled by someone, whereas autonomy and competence can be fostered by the individual in question.

“Just because ... I think, we are social people, we need to have these connections, I – I am anyway! I *need* to, -to -to -I’m very lucky in my family... that I have all the connections. It’s enormously important to me. I think it’s probably the most important thing. I could stand ... yeah, it’s most important, definitely –I would think. The other two are important –sure! But, um ... you can do something about the confidence in your abilities... and you can do something about being in control of things, but uh ... *that* you, you just *need* to have. It –it’s –you can’t – well you *can*... –you can rush out and *try* to make friends and stuff, but if you don’t *click* with anybody, or you’re just sort of left sitting on the shelf, that’s pretty sad.” (Simba)

In Relation to Being an Exerciser

When thinking about the value they place on each of the needs as exercisers, the RM’s generally felt that autonomy and competence were of highest importance (primary and secondary). With the exception of Rae who felt relatedness was of primary importance to her as an exerciser, the group perceived this third need to be of lowest (tertiary) importance because exercise is something they do for themselves and even in a class setting, it is still an individual activity. Rae’s feelings regarding connectedness to others may be due in part to her membership in the Cafeteria Club.

“I think, um ... maybe ... maybe confidence in your abilities, because then you’re not going to try to do things that you can’t do ... and being in control ... and meaningful connections to others –that’s not so important when you’re exercising because it’s just *you* that’s doing the exercise. In a group setting ... yeah, you’re still doing it on your own. You’re not -you’re not working –you’re not working as a team. If you’re working as a *team*, that’s different.” (Simba)

“Well, I think it applies -being in control of your decisions and behaviours as far as, it’s only *you* can, uh, that can *do* the exercise and you have to ... uh, be in

control of... –it's *your* body and you have to look after it. Nobody else is going to... look after it for you, unless –if you don't cooperate." (Rae)

When reflecting on how they would have valued the three needs as initiates, very little changed, with autonomy remaining in primary importance, competence secondary, and relatedness crossing between secondary and tertiary. Simba had not been asked to reflect on this, and thus the analysis was only conducted on the remaining two.

"I really didn't have a connection to others until *after* I'd been coming... to the Y for a while. So... that wasn't important at that stage of the game –when I first came. I came *mainly* because of my health and I didn't know whether it was going to help me or not. I didn't really *know* what –whether it was going to benefit me or not" (Rae)

In Relation to Society at Large

When asked to think about how society would place these needs in order of importance, there was confusion at times with Rae and Mike about what was being asked, in that they responded with answers that were suggestive of need satisfaction, not need value. Simba, however, seemed to grasp the task before her, describing what other people "would" or "should" think about the needs, not how autonomous, competence, or related they "are".

"You would have to be thinking of other people, not just yourself ... and you'd still have your confidence, but you're not in control. 'Cause there's *more* of them! ... there are a lot of other *things* influencing *everything*... in your life in general. You *aren't* in control." (Mike)

"I think, they'd be pretty well the same. Everybody should be in control of your *own –personal* decisions... yeah, we're responsible for *ourselves* ... *what* we do... but ... meaningful connections to others ... I don't know whether that's... important to people –young people or not ... and I think they have confidence in their abilities –young people (says with a laugh)." (Rae)

"Well, I think meaningful conne ... – I think the –the –people like being in control far too much here. Yeah, everybody wants to be in control of everything. Well, I think it *should* be more meaningful connection with others, but I don't think it *is* (long pause)... I think it, uh, I think the being in control bit, is more the way the world works –the way our society works, because um ... it's so much 'me, me,

me', society... and that -that sorta cuts out meaningful connections, sometimes. So, I don't know if that's *right* or not, but maybe that's probably a pretty *bleak* look on ... our society" (Simba)

Summary Overview: Understanding the Whole Group

Consistent with the hermeneutic approach used in this investigation, a summary overview was conducted for the entire group of participants ($N = 6$).

All six participants were at different stages of exercise adoption/adherence (see Table 1), ranging from 3 weeks to 12 years ($M = 2.31$ years). Half of the participants were returning to formal exercise after having been forced to abandon their exercise programs for an extended period of time. The most popular modes of exercise the participants engaged in were walking (83.33 %), Aqua Fit classes (66.67 %), stretching (67.67 %), and resistance training (50.00 %).

Motivation and Internalization of Exercise Regulation

Analyses of both the IN and RM groups revealed that solving an 'important problem' was the predominant form of regulation in the sample. Given that placing value and personal importance on achieving a goal is part of what defines *identified regulation* (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2002), it could be suggested that both groups were guided highly by *identified* motives.

Though data reflecting characteristics of *intrinsic* regulation (e.g., enjoyment) were present in the IN group, it was not predominant and only surfaced as a secondary or tertiary motive. The RM group accounts, on the other hand, were much more heavily laden with elements of the most highly internalized forms of regulation (intrinsic and integrated), as all of those women's primary reasons for exercising at this stage in their life included the enjoyment and pleasure they gain from engaging in their exercise programs, and in one case a sense of exercise being a part of their self identity. Health

benefits were also meaningful and of primary importance to them, but at this stage it seems preventive rather than treatment oriented. For a visual overview of the primary investigator's interpretation of the whole sample's exercise regulation, see Table 3.

Having a sense of conviction in the benefits of exercise emerged as a helpful motivational element for many of the participants, regardless of IN or RM status. Furthermore, a sense of conviction in the belief that one will attend their classes (whether it be because they have invested money to be there, or because they have proven themselves adherent over time) and will achieve their goals, was present in a couple of participant's accounts, demonstrating a sense of competence, in that they are confident in their ability to overcome challenges associated with exercise motivation.

Accountability towards one's exercise leader (either a group instructor or personal trainer) and classmates was another supportive element in the initiation process, both in the IN group and in the RM group, as they reflected on their initiate experiences. The general principle that came across from these accounts was that when someone is outwardly and intentionally trying to help them and investing time in them, the person being helped wants to show their helper that they are progressing. Essentially, they want their helper to know that their efforts have not been in vain and that the helped person is grateful. The exercisers view these leaders as mentors, not bosses, and as such have developed a sense of 'duty' towards them instead of 'obligation'. As such, both of the participants who had received mentoring from a personal trainer (as is offered to all new members of the YMCA on a trial basis) held those trainers in high esteem and were keen to demonstrate their accomplishments to them. One participant who had developed strong ties to her exercise leader and classmates felt the same way in that she wanted to be there,

not only for her own personal gain, but because she felt that with her classmates having all been so helpful to her, skipping class would be letting them down.

None of these women perceived exercise to be a competitive endeavour, nor did they find it serious enough to feel obligated to follow all of their leader's instructions. Rather, it was most important for them to "listen to their body" and exercise accordingly. This may suggest that when exercising at this stage of life, they were particularly in need of support for self-determination in order to have a pleasant, progressive exercise experience that fosters adherence.

Important People

With the exception of the newest initiate, all participants were explicit in stating that they were self-motivated for exercise. Though the newest initiate did not explicitly state that she is the person who motivates herself, it was implied later in the interview that she felt she was in charge of her decision to exercise and that she would not exercise if she did not want to.

Other important people emerged as influences in the initiate experience, such as friends, husbands, and daughters. The presence of an important other who was already established as a successful regular exerciser emerged as an important theme in the IN experience. Often this was the same person who had recommended them to the YMCA and/or their respective exercise classes. By having an exercise buddy or friend that is already a regular exerciser and already has a meaningful connection to the initiate, they are likely to be helpful in supporting them in their ability to overcome obstacles related to motivation and confidence, as they have someone who can help guide them, encourage them, or simply act as a source of inspiration and role modeling during the early stages of exercise adoption (when the majority of people drop out). Being surrounded by exercisers

who were similar in age was a source of comfort for all of the IN's, as it assured them that they were not alone in the age-related physical struggles they were encountering. For the RM's, at their stage in their development as exercisers, they were more likely to find themselves as the role models.

Husbands were an important source of support in both groups, but in differing ways. For the IN group, husbands were a source of encouragement and support, but were not currently engaged in exercise themselves. The husbands of the RM's that were married were also exercisers and had memberships at the YMCA. In one case, the husband was the RM's exercise buddy. Thus, they acted not only as supports but also as companions in exercise.

Daughters and other important females who are exercisers were also common between groups. Other important females such as nieces, cousins, and long time friends were also present as important people in the participants' exercise experiences as sources of support, inspiration, and initiation. For instance, trial memberships had been given to two of the six participants by an important female in their life. These participants reflect on these trial memberships with gratitude, because they view it as having been the catalyst of change in their lives. By being introduced to the YMCA facility and programming, they were able to start 'solving' their respective problems. The other four participants did not become members via trial memberships, but some were aware that such a program exists.

While the IN's enjoyed developing a sense of camaraderie with their classmates, it emerged more evidently as a highly valued aspect of the exercise experience in the RM group as maintainers. Though both groups generally felt that meaningful connections

were the least valued psychological need with regards to exercise, the RM's displayed a much greater sense of value towards, and emotional and social investment in, the connections they had developed with their fellow exercisers over time. This was especially true for one who had become a part of a YMCA sub-community dubbed the 'Cafeteria Club' and others who continue to mourn the passing of friendships that had developed through exercise over many years. Despite seeing the value of those meaningful connections and not wanting to lose them, even the RM's agreed that they are a 'bonus' in the exercise experience.

Overcoming Barriers and Challenges

The participants in general conceded that the initiate experience is not always easy, especially when initiating an exercise program with a physical injury. From a psychological standpoint, even the long established RM's claimed to still have occasional days when their motivation is low. A promising finding that emerged from the RM accounts was that they begin to forget about how difficult it was when they first started, which likely contributes to their effectiveness in being self-motivated.

With respect to the days of low motivation, two types of cues-to-action emerged from the interviews, (1) self-prompted and (2) outsider-prompted. The self-prompted cues were triggered when the exercisers became mindful of their sluggishness and then proceeded to remind themselves about the reasons for why they want to exercise (e.g., especially functional independence). The outsider-prompted cues were brought up by one participant whose husband's inquisition into her exercise behaviour for the day would incite feelings of guilt within her if she had been considering not attending that day, reflecting acute guidance by introjected regulation on those occasions. Statements representing intrinsically regulated motives did not surface as a prompt in either

circumstance, suggesting that enjoyment and feeling good may not be enough on its own to ignite this exerciser's motivation on motivationally low days, even as a long-term adherer.

The weather presented problems for both groups, in that snow and ice during the winter created hazardous conditions for not only exercising (if they chose to be outside), but also in transporting themselves to the exercise facility. As such, if their mode of transportation could not be secured in poor weather, they were not likely to try to overcome that barrier, as it was safer to stay at home and avoid the risk of falling. The YMCA facility was noted by several participants as being a 'saviour' in terms of overcoming environmental barriers, in that it provided a sheltered, safe, place for them to exercise the way they "want to"; meaning that they don't have to modify their behaviour to accommodate the inclement weather conditions. The facility also acts as a motivational stimulus for some who found the surroundings to be inspirational based on its aesthetics, modernity, cleanliness, convenience, and high traffic flow. The friendly and helpful nature of the staff was also noted as contributing to the overall appealing environment of the YMCA.

Physical challenges were tackled by both groups through an understanding that at this stage in life they need to listen to their bodies above all else and to only do what they feel they can do. As such, for these older female adults, confidence in their exercise abilities appears to be achieved as a result of successfully achieving their exercise behaviour goals without incurring injury, as opposed to expanding their potential as exercisers. They do not feel as though their exercise behaviour is being evaluated by others (with the exception of times spent with a personal trainer), or that they are in

competition with other classmates. Furthermore, they do not want to push themselves too hard for fear of incurring an injury. As such, while they are eager to learn from their exercise leaders, and in some cases want to show them how well they are doing, they do not feel obligated to strictly follow their instruction. Rather, they feel free in their ability to modify their exercises and do not feel pressured to keep up with the instructor or the rest of the class. They feel that it is an individual experience, even in a group setting, in that exercise initiates sculpt their experience based on what their body, not the instructor, tells them.

Commitment: Time vs. Effort

With a concern for pushing themselves too hard leading to injury, it is not surprising that these women were motivated to invest more time in their exercise, but not more effort. Generally, the individuals who spoke of pushing themselves had been required to take an extended period of time off from their exercise programs and were working hard to return to the level of fitness they once possessed.

The concept of time was also mentioned in reference to missing classes or preparing for absences, in that the participants in general are woeful about missing a class, are disappointed when they have to take time off for illness, injury, or vacation and sometimes are just so enthusiastic about their exercise experience that they decide to include an extra session during some weeks. In any case, the participants are generally anxious to make up for missed time and will typically plan substitute sessions ahead of time if they know they will be missing a day, or will find alternative ways of exercising. When on vacation, some go so far as to bring exercise equipment with them and/or plan to go for walks while they are away.

“Everything Changes, Nothing Remains Without Change.”

(Buddha, c. 563-483 B.C.)

Most of the participants alluded to having relocated to a new city at some point in their lives. For those who did so in older adulthood, they found that joining the YMCA and starting an exercise program was a helpful tool in their transition to a new place, especially because of the social benefits. Similarly, beginning an exercise program was useful for some in the transition to retirement, whereby they were ensuring that they would start taking time back for themselves after being in the service of others for so long.

Though few participants felt that being female had any influence on their experience as exercisers today, they all agreed that times have changed and many were keen to point out that social inequalities with respect to gender roles and physical activity were not uncommon when they were growing up and trying to establish themselves as women and young mothers. Several recounted stories of experiences in their ascent to equal rights, such as joining feminist groups or obtaining their driver's license without their husband's consent. Most were able to describe how exercise was not something people sought out in their past, rather exercise was achieved by everyday living. It was an outdoor existence for many, especially those who grew up on farms. One participant who grew up in a country with a warmer climate than Canada found the idea of an outdoor existence to be particularly true for her, but not the gender differences. This may be in part due to cultural differences and in part due to the fact that she came from a farming family that was very successful and financially secure, which enabled her to attend a boarding school where girls were commonly active in sports and recreation. For the rest

of the participants, it was generally conceded that the presence of females in sport and exercise was not as socially acceptable as it is today.

Long Term Absences- Illness, Injury, Surgery, Vacation, and Death

Themes relating to long term absences from exercise were common throughout both groups. Most commonly, participants were aware of fellow exercisers that were absent from class due to illness or injury and many of the participants themselves had either been recently afflicted by colds and flus, requiring them to miss a class, or injury that had required them to spend many months away from their exercise programs. One IN's exercise adherence was affected indirectly by her husband's surgery, requiring her to leave her exercise program for seven months so that she could care for him. While none of the participants live in a long-term care facility, many know of a former exerciser who had fallen into ill health and since moved on to the care of a nursing home.

Long vacations, to tropical climates in the winter or up to "the cottage" in the summer, were another form of absence that commonly arose during the interviews; either discussing their own adventures and plans, or the absence of others from their classes. Going on 'permanent vacation', or the passing away of one's fellow exercisers only arose in the RM group and, though not commonly occurring, seemed to affect them deeply. Given that experiencing the loss of a friend in exercise is probably not a phenomenon many younger exercisers experience, this event is likely to be fairly unique to the older adult exercise experience.

Mental Well-Being and Need Salience in Life and Exercise Contexts

In discussing how SDT's three psychological needs appear in their own lives, as well as in their exercise experience, elements suggestive of high need satisfaction were present in both the IN and RM groups. The only exception was the newest initiate whose

responses reflected lower levels of competence and relatedness satisfaction via exercise. Given the stage of her development (i.e., 3 weeks), this is not surprising. When it comes to sharing the decision making and volitionally handing over control to another person, mixed feelings were evident in the RM group with respect to how this would influence their sense of autonomy in life in general. Both the RM and IN exercisers were open to the idea of transferring decision making control in exercise if the person in question is knowledgeable and going to help them or teach them. Furthermore, they were adamant in their belief that if they were not pleased with, or were too challenged by the exercises presented to them, they simply would not do them. Because they do not feel obligated to follow the leader's instruction, there is less risk of them losing their sense of autonomy in their exercise behaviour.

Once again, with the exception of the newest initiate, all of the participants perceived their general mental well-being to be "Good!" to "Excellent!" While they all felt that their mental well-being improved as a result of exercising, many could not comment on how they typically feel while exercising, because they are generally too focused to notice, but many agree that it acts as a stress relief because it provides a distraction to their daily problems. In each of the cases where being 'too focussed to know' was the response, the participants exercised in a class setting, where they would be following a leader and thus focussed on the instructions being given. One RM who only engaged in independent, continuous movement activities (i.e., walking), on the other hand, was able to give a detailed description of her thoughts and feelings while exercising. Thus the ability to recall one's mental well-being during exercise is more likely due to the nature of the activity and not one's memory.

Need Values

In terms of themselves as people, it was felt almost unanimously that being in charge of one's decisions and behaviours was of primary importance to both groups (See Table 4). The main differences between the two groups were that the RM's all felt that confidence in one's abilities was of secondary importance to them, while it was of primary importance to all of the initiates, and meaningful connections to others were of higher importance to the IN's than the RM's. In either context, relatedness was most commonly located in secondary or tertiary position of importance in either group and was the only need to be placed in the tertiary position in relation to one's self as a person or as an exerciser. When asked to reflect on how they would have viewed the importance of these needs when they first started, the main difference was that confidence in one's abilities was moved into the level of secondary importance by the RM's.

When asked to reflect on how they imagined society would value the three psychological needs, the INs placed meaningful connections unanimously in the position of primary importance, while confidence in one's ability and feeling in charge of one's decisions and behaviours were scattered across all three positions. The RM's felt that meaningful connections were of lower value than confidence in one's abilities and being in charge of one's decisions and behaviours being in the eyes of society. It is interesting to note that all of the participants felt that their values differed from their perception of society's values.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

Purpose and Analyses

The primary purpose of this study was to explore motivation and psychological need salience in the initiatory and maintenance experiences of older female adult exercisers. This was accomplished by conducting a qualitative investigation guided by the hermeneutic approach to research (Willis, 2007). Data collection involved the completion of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews by three older females classified as exercise initiates and three other females classified as reflective maintainers who were recruited from a local YMCA. Holistic analyses were conducted at the participant level; Categorical analyses were conducted at the sub-group level.

Summary of Key Initiate Results

Findings from the initiate group suggest that the initiates were all succeeding as new exercisers, given that they were largely adhering to their programs despite being faced with regular challenges relating to time commitments, weather conditions, and health complications. Emergent themes regarding physicians and important others suggested these important others were autonomy supportive in the initiate experience, since this group of initiates did not feel pressured by others in their decision to exercise. More specifically, the presence of an established exercise friend and receiving a recommendation or suggestion regarding exercise initiation from someone they respect and trust seemed to be an important source of inspiration, motivation, and meaningful connection in their initial stages of exercise adoption. Participant narratives suggested that an established exercise buddy would be more beneficial in the early stages of exercise adoption than a fellow initiate, because they would be less likely to suggest not

attending. Physicians supported IN's autonomy by presenting exercise as an effective adjunct treatment for their ailments instead of 'prescribing' it as a necessary treatment. As such, none of the initiates felt pressured to adopt exercise. Rather, it appears that female IN's perceived others to be supportive informants who provided support for exercise while the decision to exercise remained self-determined.

Another key finding that emerged from the initiate group was that none of the initiates felt obligated to follow their exercise leader's instruction. Rather, they felt free to modify their experience as needed and were adamant about listening to their own bodies over outside prompts. This was potentially beneficial in their exercise experience because, aside from supporting their sense of autonomy, by listening to their bodies and modifying their exercise accordingly, they were likely able to reduce or avoid much of the negative affect associated with beginning, and terminating an exercise program (Chao, Foy & Farmer, 2001).

Summary of Key Reflective Maintainer Results

With regards to important others, husbands emerged as influential exercise friends in the RM's exercise experiences. This is consistent with previous research that suggests exercising with a buddy, especially one's spouse, helps promote exercise behaviour (USDHHS, 2004). The development of meaningful connections to exercise classmates over time emerged as a valued part of the exercise maintainer experience. The development of these new connections, like the IN group, was not present in their own early experiences as initiates, but evolved gradually. Other reflections on their initial exercise experiences revealed that the RM's also encountered challenges (such as weather and health conditions) when beginning their exercise programs as older adults and that long term absences of classmates (particularly related to death) were less salient

or impactful in their initiate experiences as they are now in maintaining their exercise regimens.

Reasons Motivating Exercise in Older Female Exercise Initiates

Solving a personally important problem was the primary reason for the IN group to take up an exercise program in older adulthood. Based on SDT, this notion of placing value and importance in the achievement of a goal reflects *identified regulation*, a highly internalized form of *extrinsic regulation*. Secondary and tertiary reasons/motives included: (a) enjoyment and feeling good, (b) knowing that one needs to be active, and (c) improved appearance/weight management. In SDT terms, these motives reflect *intrinsic*, *introjected*, and *external* regulations respectively.

As reflective maintainers, the RM group embodied motives that were suggestive of more internalized regulation for exercise, such that while motives reflecting *identified* regulation were still observed, motives reflecting *intrinsic* regulation were also present at the primary level for all three RM's and motives reflective of the most internalized form of *extrinsic* regulation (*integrated* regulation) were present with one RM. In discussing their initiate experiences, however, the RM's reasons for initiating exercise behaviour were more indicative of *identified* regulation alone.

Taken together these findings suggest that identified motives, particularly those that are related to personally important health problems, appear to be an effective form of behaviour regulation in the early stages of exercise adoption as a female in older adulthood. This corroborates findings from previous studies that suggest *identified* regulation is the strongest predictor of variance in exercise behaviour for older adults (Wilson, Blanchard, LeBlanc, Nehl & Baker, 2007) and younger cohorts (Wilson, Rodgers, Fraser & Murray, 2004) and that more internalized forms of regulation may

overtake *extrinsic* motives once in maintenance (Markland & Medley, 1998).

Interestingly, this observation is not consistent with contentions pertaining to motives that initiate exercise involvement. For example, Mullan and Markland (1997) suggest that controlling forms of motivation such as external and introjected regulation likely prompt initiatory exercise behaviours but change with time to more self-determined motives. On the basis of the present study, it would appear that one of the most self-determined sources of extrinsic motivation (i.e., identified) prompted the initiation in older adulthood rather than controlling reasons for involvement. It is possible that this observation is related to the nature of the sample (i.e., older adults) for whom less evidence is available regarding their initiation motives in exercise. An alternative explanation concerns the lack of evidence supporting the role of controlling motives in exercise (Mullan & Markland, 1997; Wilson et al., 2002) which is further corroborated in this investigation.

Psychological Need Fulfillment in Initiatory Experiences

The accounts of all participants were suggestive of moderate-to-high psychological need fulfillment in both exercise and general life contexts. When discussing the value participants placed on each need, confidence in one's ability (reflecting *competence*) and feeling in charge of one's decisions and behaviours (reflecting *autonomy*) emerged as highly important in both the contexts of exercise and as being a person in general. Establishing and maintaining meaningful connections to others (reflecting *relatedness*) was generally valued at a lower level in the context of exercise. Participants also reported that handing over decision making control to others whom they trusted and felt were helping them would not cause them negative affect, supporting the contention of SDT that one's sense of *autonomy* can be maintained when volitionally passing control to another person (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2002). This observation is

consistent with the contentions of Deci and Ryan (1985; 2002), who claim relatedness may play a more distal role in motivational processes. It is also consistent with previous research that has found mixed results for the role of relatedness in exercise contexts (Wilson, Rodgers, Blanchard & Gessell, 2003) and has reported that regular (albeit younger) exercisers consistently endorse higher competence and autonomy than relatedness feelings when exercising. Previous studies of younger exercisers (Wilson et al., 2007) have suggested that the uneven endorsement of need satisfaction may be a function of being a consistent and habitual exerciser rather than an initiate. The data presented in this study however, implicate relatedness as an appreciated part of the exercise experience, but less important than either competence or autonomy for exercise initiates. Future studies would do well to explore this further to determine why relatedness seems less important to exercisers than feeling competent and self-directed. One possibility has been forwarded by Vallerand (1997) who suggests that multivariate processes may 'compensate' for one another such that all needs do not require satisfying to the same extent.

Role of Exercise

Inspection of participant accounts from the semi-structured interviews offered insight into the role of exercise in the lives of older female initiates. Becoming involved in exercise was not only influential for the participants in terms of health benefits and psychological well-being, but the social benefits associated with joining an exercise facility also played a role in other aspects of their lives such as the transition of moving from one city to another, and the transition from working to retirement. Previous research has shown that exercise can act as a buffer for challenging events such as relocating (Bouchard, Blair & Haskell, 2007) and these data corroborate such findings.

With regards to how physical activity and exercise were present in their experiences as females throughout their lives, participants agreed that times have changed and that the presence of females in exercise and physical activity contexts has become much more socially accepted with time. So much so that few participants felt that being female had little influence on their experience as older adult exercisers today. From their perspectives, exercise was not something people (especially not females) actively sought out in their past. Rather, when they were growing up, everyday life was an outdoor, recreationally physically active existence.

The observations regarding increased social acceptance of females in physical activity contexts is consistent with evolutionary views regarding the self (Fox, 1997). Fox (1997) notes that activities which were once frowned upon for females (and males) have gained increasing acceptance as societal standards defining gender roles have evolved over time. The extent to which women in this investigation have replaced active living with structured exercise is unclear but remains ripe for further investigation.

Subgroup Differences and Similarities

One commonality across groups included the notion of ‘listening to one’s body’. Neither the RM’s nor the IN’s felt obligated to follow their instructor’s lead if their bodies were to tell them otherwise. Consistent with Annesi (2002b) this sense of self-direction and lack of obligation towards conformity (with classmates) and obedience (to the instruction and/or instructor) is probably one of the most influential elements of these older female adult exercisers’ success as initiates and maintainers. Because they feel free to sculpt their own experience, it seems likely that older exercise initiates are less likely to experience feelings of incompetence in their ability to maintain exercise over time or endure negative affect that can accompany exercise participation during initial stages

(Mullan & Markland, 1997). Since these participants did not ‘over do it’, they feel capable of being able to repeat the behaviour again in the future (supporting their sense of competence), likely contributing to a sense of enjoyment in their exercise experience.

Ruppar and Scheider (2007) have revealed that an older adult’s beliefs about, and interpretations of, exercise are highly influential on their subsequent behaviour. Links with Ruppar and Schneider’s (2007) work are evident in participant accounts of executive control over exercise due to either health priorities or avoidance of structured advice from exercise leaders when incompatible with physical feelings. Though the participants of this study justify their belief in this stance based on their age and the challenges they perceive themselves to be having at this stage of life, other age cohorts may also be more successful if they adopted a similar approach when initiating their exercise programs. Future research would do well to explore this possibility further.

A second commonality that emerged across groups was the theme of long term/indefinite absences related to illness, injury, vacation, and death. Long term health benefits can be attained if an individual remains regularly committed to their exercise regimen over time. Adherence fluctuations, however, markedly drop during the first 6 months of exercise adoption (Bouchard et al., 2007). Given that active lifestyles have important implications for people’s health, and the effectiveness of the health care system, addressing initiation and adherence issues remain important research foci.

Negative affect and motivational and environmental barriers are typically presented as challenges to adherence in older adulthood (Chao et al., 2001) and data from this study suggests that drop out rates may also be partially explained by other factors such as illness, injury, surgery, and long vacations, as they all emerged as common

reasons for disrupting one's exercise program in both groups. As such, the accounts of participants in this study suggest that long term absences are not uncommon in the older adult exercise experience which means that if researchers are only assessing the departure of exercisers from their program without investigating into their intention to, and date of return, the person may be inaccurately labeled as a 'drop out'.

Conceptual clarity regarding the characteristics of an initiate (or adherer) remains controversial and lacking uniformity across the literature (Bouchard et al., 2007). One recent study, for example, classified exercisers as initiates if they exercised once per week, or less, for the previous six months, but intended to exercise in the future (Milne et al., 2008). Observations from this study suggest that several impediments may impact adherence decisions amongst older adult initiates beyond merely motivational issues. It seems reasonable, therefore, to suggest that greater clarity be afforded in the empirical study of characteristics that distinguish initiates from maintainers/adherents if progress towards changing the inactivity patterns of older Canadians is to be made.

The exercise regulation of both groups was consistent with previous research that suggests more internalized forms of regulation have a greater dominance in exercise maintenance than during initiation (Ingledew, Markland & Medley, 1998). Given that identified regulation is often demonstrated to be the strongest predictor of exercise intentions (Wilson & Rodgers, 2004), it is not surprising that all of the participants, regardless of group, were highly motivated for identified reasons. For the initiates, and in the RM's reflections on their motivation as initiates, identified regulation appeared as the dominant form of motivation. While all of the participants were motivated in this way, it should be noted that the RM's were simultaneously highly motivated through the more

internalized forms of regulation (integrated and intrinsic), suggesting that identified regulation continues to be important during maintenance, but may act in a complementary fashion to more internalized forms of regulation.

These observations are in line with Mullan and Markland (1997) who suggest exercisers are more self-determined in the latter stages of exercise adoption. The data pertaining to RM's experiences also suggest that motivation may be more complex than focusing on a single reason for involvement, and perhaps, that certain sources of motivation may exert synergistic effects in behaviour amongst new exercisers. This notion has been partially supported by Vlachopoulos and Karageorghis (2005) who indicate that the combined impact of identified and intrinsic regulations was associated with most exercise enjoyment. The extent to which 'additive' effects on behaviour stem from multiple sources of motivation seems like an important direction for future studies to consider.

For clarification, this does not mean that people driven primarily by identified regulation are *low* in their exercise related self-determination, as this was clearly not the case with the participants in this study. It simply means that their regulation is *less* self-determined than those guided by more internalized forms. Furthermore, the lack of intrinsic motivation as an explicit reason for exercising in the IN group does not mean that the IN's do not find their exercise to be enjoyable or interesting, but that these motives were not reported as important sources of motivation at this stage in their development. This may be an important observation in explaining why the findings of this study differ from those that suggest intrinsic motivation is equally present alongside identified regulation in the early stages of exercise adoption (Mullan & Markland, 1997)

and that levels of intrinsic motivation do not increase with longer participation in exercise (Rose, Parfitt & Williams, 2005). In this study, participants were simply asked “why do you exercise?” and thus motives associated specifically with intrinsic motivation were not prompted, nor solicited. This suggests that intrinsic motivation may become more salient during exercise maintenance compared with initiation although such conclusions remain speculative given (a) the cross-sectional design used in this study and (b) the challenges of defining an initiate in exercise contexts.

With regards to psychological needs, most participants (regardless of group) placed relatedness in a position of lower value than autonomy and competence in relation to being an exerciser. Furthermore, the salience of relatedness as a primary value of the initiates in general life contexts (societal and personal values), but not in the specific context of exercise supports the contention by Deci and Ryan (2000) that relatedness may not always be required for internalizing motivation in a specific behaviour, but that this need serves as a distal factor in the process of internalization, providing a “secure relational base” (p. 235). For example, the initiates all claimed to feel very meaningfully connected to others in their lives in general, suggesting that their need for relatedness may be highly satisfied in general, and most felt it was of primary importance to them and in the eyes of society at large. In the context of exercise, however, the longer they had been exercising, the less important relatedness seemed to be. Based on their accounts describing the influence of their established exercising friends in their exercise adoption, it could be suggested that relatedness plays a more important supportive role in the earliest stages of exercise adoption, as has been argued in previous studies of Canadian adults (Wilson et al., 2002; Wilson et al., 2003).

With respect to autonomy, participants reported accepting shared decision making involved in various behaviours, including exercise, so long as it is beneficial to them. This is consistent with existing research that has shown that people are often relieved to grant decision making power to a person who has more expertise and knowledge about a particular situation, in the context of health promotion (Williams, 2002). Extrapolating from these findings, and previous empirical work by Williams (2002), it seems clear that supporting autonomy remains important for motivating nascent attempts to change behaviour. These observations coupled with previous studies (Williams, 2002) substantiate the importance of interpersonal styles during human interactions and suggest that health promotion professionals interested in changing or maintaining exercise behaviour would do well to listen with empathy, acknowledge the challenge of behavioural change, and be supportive in their communication with others (Williams, 2002).

While a number of similarities emerged from participant accounts of their experiences in exercise, several important distinctions were evident between the groups from the interview data. One difference that emerged between the groups was the belief that exercise could solve their problems. While the IN's were experiencing improvements to their various ailments, the RM's had developed a steadfast sense of conviction in the effectiveness of exercise in improving their lives. This was not always the case, however, as some mentioned that as initiates they were not sure that exercise was going to help solve their problems, but they were hopeful.

A second difference that emerged pertains to the influence of important others. While the IN's were often not concerned with bringing friendships from the exercise

environment into their social lives, two of the more advanced RM's reported contemplating such a move or having already done so (for instance, the Cafeteria Club). Also, doctors did not emerge as important others in the RM accounts, except when reflecting on their initiate experience, while they did in the IN accounts. These differences are not surprising given that there is a greater presence of intrinsic motivation for exercise in this group and friendships are relationships that are commonly gained by having fun and taking pleasure in each other's company. Physicians, on the other hand, are probably more often associated with important, but less hedonistic, values such as health and disease prevention/treatment which were the primary motives behind the IN's exercise behaviour and the RM's exercise behaviour as initiates. Furthermore, the notion of an 'established exercise friend' or role model was not evident in the RM accounts, as they felt that they, as reflective maintainers, had become the role models for other people.

Practical Implications

Aside from contributing to theoretical knowledge, the results of this study may also have practical implications for professionals working in the exercise domain with older female adults. For instance, the finding regarding the participants' preference to listen to their bodies above the instruction of the exercise leader may serve as a valuable mantra for women initiating exercise in older adulthood (and perhaps even for men and younger cohorts) because feeling free to modify one's activity and level of effort may help to increase enjoyment by reducing perceptions of negative affect, as well as, physical exhaustion and pain. This in turn may help to reduce drop out rates. As such, health professionals may do well to inform new exercisers on this concept, whether in an individual training session or in a class setting.

Having a friend who is already established as a regular exerciser was another finding that may be useful in practical terms, such that it could be recommended to new exercisers that they communicate with such a friend, especially during the early days of their exercise initiation. If they do not have a friend who is a regular exerciser, they could be introduced to a member (if in an exercise facility) who is similar in age and could be viewed as a potential role model or mentor.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study used a novel approach and yielded new insights into the motivational factors influencing older female initiates' exercise experiences, a number of limitations exist that should be recognized and future directions offered to address these areas. Each limitation is presented below, accompanied by potential future directions that would aid in addressing these areas and advance the gerontology literature in motivation, exercise, and SDT.

1) Nature of Qualitative Study

One limitation of this study relates to the nature of qualitative inquiry. For instance, the hypothetical nature of the questions regarding need thwarting (participants were asked "How would you feel if on a mentally good day ..."). While the discussion elicited valuable information on the participants' psychological approach to their exercise behaviour and their ability to sculpt their own experience, stronger conclusions may have been able to be drawn had the questions been addressed in real-time settings where support for the three needs could be manipulated. As such, it is proposed that investigators consider exploring not only how needs fulfillment is affected in need thwarting situations, but also the psychological and emotional responses one experiences and how it affects their mental approach to their exercise behaviour. Furthermore, the

questions pertaining to need thwarting in this study were based on a single, acute instance. Thus, researchers may also want to incorporate this same phenomenon with chronic need thwarting as well.

Data classification was dependent upon the subjective interpretation of the investigator and thus, depending on one's ontological and epistemological stance in research, this could either be a strength (the investigator is able to take their understanding of the participant and the context of the interview and topic to assign classifications in order to accurately represent the data being analyzed) or a limitation (the investigator's interpretation is not objective and biased and thus does not accurately represent the data being analyzed). Furthermore, the hermeneutical approach is only one of many approaches to obtaining knowledge and developing understanding. Given that different ontological and epistemological outlooks, and different methodological approaches, have the potential to unveil different or new findings, it is suggested that future research tackle the older female adult exercise initiate experience from other philosophical perspectives and designs.

Participant recall is another common limitation in research which applies to this study in two ways: (1) limitations in the ability of the RM's to reflect on their initiate experience and (2) limitations in the ability of participants to reflect on their last bout of exercise. Due to scheduling constraints (e.g., participants being absent due to illness) and having a limited pool of potential participants to draw from, some participants had to reflect on their last exercise class instead of the class they would have attended immediately before the interview. Thus, the results pertaining to the data on need salience and mental well-being in exercise that day should be interpreted with caution and treated

as exploratory. While it was a promising finding that the natural progression into exercise maintenance may involve forgetting the hardships experienced during initiation (as it may positively influence motivation), it also reflects limitations associated with participant recall, or in other words, the ability of the participants to accurately describe their experiences in full detail.

2) Sampling Techniques/Strategies

The sampling technique used in this study also presents limitations. For instance, all participants were recruited from the same location. Older female exercise initiates from a different facility or geographical location may have had very different experiences. Also, though the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of older female exercise initiates, knowledge on the older male exercise initiate experience is still needed and could not be addressed through this study. Also, the experiences of initiates are still not well understood. As such, it is suggested that future research attempt to address a broad spectrum of initiate experiences.

3) Design of Study

The design of this study was cross-sectional and thus was limited to current and retrospective accounts of the participants' experiences. Thus, future research may benefit from employing a longitudinal design that captures the initiates' experiences on multiple occasions during this crucial phase to better understand the development of their exercise experience. Also, with regards to thick description, an attempt was made to limit the quantity of questions so that more time would be available for generating thick description through the use of probing and follow-up questions. There were, however, still a large number of questions and thus not all answers were overly developed.

The order of the interviews themselves may have also affected the quality of the overall report. Due to scheduling conflicts and problems associated with recruitment, noted in the reflexive journal (see Appendix F), the participants were interviewed as they became available, and thus randomly. While attempts were made to analyze concurrently throughout the entire process and from interview-to-interview, the quality of the questions being asked to the RM's may have been improved had the investigator been able to collect and analyze the IN group's data prior to interviewing the RM group

4) Theoretical Orientation

The theoretical orientation of the study also presented challenges that may have limited the quality of responses from the participants. For example, the confusion of some participants with the difference between need satisfaction and need value. In this case, only three participants did not place relatedness in the position of primary importance when discussing themselves as people in general. Coincidentally, they were also the three participants who did not appear to fully grasp how meaningful connections fit into the activity. Meaning that they may have placed being in charge and confidence in one's abilities according to 'how important' it was to them, but placed meaningful connections based on either (a) how it influences the satisfaction of the other two needs or (b) how well they believed they were able to satisfy it themselves. While these may be valid reasons for why relatedness is less important to them, the issue of value, not satisfaction, was under scrutiny and thus the findings should be interpreted with caution. It is suggested then, that in future research if the needs are to be used in discussion, they should be fully defined and explained to the participants and/or the wording of the questions should be revised more thoroughly to improve comprehensibility.

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to explore motivation and psychological need salience in the initiatory and maintenance experiences of older female adult exercisers. Key findings included (a) the presence of motives reflecting *identified* regulation in the initial stages of exercise adoption, (b) the presence of important others, such as husbands, friends, and/or classmates who are already established in their exerciser behaviour, (c) feeling free to make the decision to listen to one's own body over the instruction of the exercise leaders, and (d) that overall, confidence in one's abilities (reflecting *competence*) and being in charge of one's decisions and behaviours (reflecting *autonomy*) were consistently perceived as being of high value in relation to being an exerciser and as a person in general. Meaningful connections (reflecting *relatedness*), however, were perceived as being of less importance in exercise contexts to those who perceived them to be of primary importance at the person level, and vice versa.

As such, the findings of this study support the contentions of SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2002) in that relatedness appears to play an important, but distal role in contributing to psychological well-being and that individuals are able to volitionally transfer control of decision making to others without thwarting their sense of *autonomy*. With regards to behavioural regulation, these older female adult exercisers appeared to be guided primarily by *identified* regulation during initiation, accompanied by other more internalized forms of regulation with maintenance, which is consistent with the theoretical contention that internalized forms of regulation will be associated with positive health behaviours (Deci & Ryan, 2002). More research is required to expand upon the initiate and older adult exercise experiences, and to address areas of limitation within the present study.

Table 1

Demographic Data of All Participants

	Group	Stage	Duration of Program	Age (years)	Height (feet)	Weight (kg)	BMI (kg/m ²)
Laura	IN	New Initiate	3 Weeks	77	5'3"	79.38	31
Brandy	IN	Returning Initiate	4 Weeks (since 7 month break after 5 months of regular exercise)	77	5'2.5"	63.5	25.2
Australia	IN	Cusp of Maintenance	23 Weeks	66	5'2"	65.77	26.5
Simba	RM	Newly Re- Established Exerciser	6 Weeks (since 6 month break after 6.5 years of regular exercise)	75	5'4"	71.67	27.1
Mike	RM	Re-Established Exerciser	52 Weeks	80	5'3"	77.11	30.1
Rae	RM	Long Term Adherer	576 Weeks (12 years)	81	5'4"	64.86	24.5
Total Sample (M)			110.88 Weeks (2.31 years)	76	5'4"	64.86	27.4

**Note: IN = Initiate, RM = Reflective Maintainer. Participants are listed in order of stage. BMI was calculated with the following formula: $BMI = \text{weight(kg)} / \text{height(m)}^2$*

Table 2

Physical Activity Levels and Functional Independence Scores

	WTPA	LTPA	Total PA (kcal)	Vigorous (kcal)	Moderate (kcal)	Mild (kcal)	Barthel Index
Laura	2250	1540	3790 * (6.82 kcal/kg/day)	1150	360	2280	N/A
Brandy	490	2240	2730 * (6.14 kcal/kg/day)	2120	370	240	100
Australia	153	1052.5	1205.5 (2.62 kcal/kg/day)	598	202.5	405	100
Simba	1260	1690	2950 * (5.88 kcal/kg/day)	1090	420	1440	N/A
Mike	3780	1188	4968 * (9.2 kcal/kg/day)	498	420	4050	97.5
Rae	450	1090	1540 * (3.39 kcal/kg/day)	1090	0	450	97.0
Total Sample (M)	1397.2	1466.8	2863.92 * (5.675 kcal/kg/day)	1091	295.4167	8865	98.6

Note * indicates classification as "Active" based on Statistics Canada (2007) guidelines of >3.0 kcal/kg/day. WTPA = work time physical activity, LTPA = leisure time physical activity

Table 3

Visual Depiction of Exercise Motives and the Forms of Regulation they Reflect

	Group	Motives and Exercise Regulation		
		Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Laura	IN	ID "Improve flexibility to improve mobility"		
Brandy	IN	ID "Improve blood pressure to avoid taking medication"	ID/INT "Improve bone density to avoid taking medication"	
Australia	IN	ID "Improve balance for injury prevention"	"Makes me feel good" IO/EX "I know I need to be fit"	INT "I enjoy it"
Simba	RM (IN)	"Healthy aging" ID "Improve back problems"	"Want to look good in my clothes" INT "I enjoy it"	
Mike	RM (IN)	ID "Help my husband be successful with his rehab"		
Rae	RM (IN)	ID "Improve back problems"		
Simba	RM	INT "I love it. It makes me feel good."	ID "Seeing people"	
Mike	RM	INT/IG/ID "Feeling good and happy" "It's part of who I am"		EX "Weight management is a bonus too"
Rae	RM	"Maintain functional independence" INT/ID "I enjoy it. It makes me feel better. I love the water!" "It's good for my health"	ID "Socializing"	IO "I get a guilt feeling if don't go sometimes"

Note. IN = Initiate, RM = Reflective Maintainer, RM (IN) = Reflective Maintainers speaking to their motives as initiates, ID = motives reflecting Identified Regulation, INT = motives reflecting Intrinsic Regulation, EX = motives reflecting External Regulation, IO = motives reflecting Introjected Regulation, IG = motives reflecting Integrated Regulation

Table 4

Visual Depiction of Perceived Need Value/Importance

		In relation to being a person			In relation to being an exerciser			In the eyes of society		
		1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd
Laura	IN	C	R	A	C A			C A		
		R			R	-	-	R	-	-
Brandy	IN	C A								
		R	-	-	C A	R	-	R	C A	-
Australia	IN	C A						C A		
		R	-	-	A	C	R	R	-	-
Simba	RM							"R"		
Mike	RM	R	C A	-	C	A	R	A	C	R
Rae	RM	A	C	R	A	C	R	C	R	A
		A	C	R	CAR	-	-	A C	R	-

Note. IN = Initiate, RM = Reflective Maintainer, C = Confidence in one's abilities (reflecting competence), R = Meaningful connections to others (reflecting relatedness), A = Being in charge of one's decisions and behaviours (reflecting autonomy). 1st, 2nd, and 3rd refers to the order in which participants placed the three psychological needs based on perceived level of importance. Initial = initial order, Changed = order after initial answers were discussed, Final Answer = order after changed answers (if any) were discussed. "" Indicates what the participant felt it "should" be, though in her eyes it wasn't.

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Appendix A – Interview Guide Introduction

I: “Hello (name of participant), thanks for coming in. I’m Meghan; I was the one who spoke to you on the phone the other day.”

P: (response)

I: “Please make yourself comfortable. There are (light refreshments) on the table; feel free to help yourself at any time.”

P: (response)

I: “Before we dive into our discussion, I have a few papers for you to fill in (Explains the informed consent, rights of the participant, purpose of the study, and demographic questionnaire to participant). If you have any questions about anything in the papers or during the interview, don’t be afraid to ask”.

I: “Alright, now that the paper work is out of the way, let’s begin! I am going to start with some general questions about exercise and its role in your life and then we will talk about your motivation and some more specific concepts that I will explain when we get to them.”

(interview begins)

Appendix B- Measures

Demographic Questionnaire

Some Quick Questions About You!

Age: _____

Preferred Pseudonym: _____

Height: _____ Weight: _____

At what age did you start your current exercise
regimen?

How long have you been following this regimen on a
regular basis? _____

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Golf							
Gymnastics							
Hiking: level							
Hiking: hilly							
Horseshoes							
Jogging (slow)							
Jogging (fast)							
Resistance Training							
Rebounding (tramp)							
Rope Skipping							
Rowing Machine							
Running							
Skating							
Skiing: downhill							
Skiing: X-C							
Snooker							
Snowshoeing							
Stair Climbing							
Stretching Exercises							
Swimming lengths							
Swimming (wading)							
Table Tennis							
Tai Chi							
Tennis: singles							
Tennis: doubles							
Walking (stroll)							
Walking (moderate)							
Walking (brisk)							
Weightlifting							
Other							
Other							

Stage of change for exercise (Mullan & Markland, 1997)

The following statements pertain to your participation in exercise. For the purposes of these statements, exercise is defined as all physical activity that is planned, structured, and involves repetitive bodily movement done to improve or maintain one or more components of physical fitness (e.g., strength, endurance, flexibility, etc). Please keep this definition of exercise in mind as you respond to the following question.

According to the definition provided above, do you participate in exercise? Please check one box only.

I currently exercise regularly and have been doing so for **more than 6 months** ☐

I currently exercise regularly but have begun doing so for **less than 6 months** ☐

I currently exercise a little but not regularly ☐

I currently do not exercise but I am thinking about starting in the **next 6 months** ☐

I currently do not exercise and do not intend to start in the next 6 months ☐

The Barthel Index (Mahoney & Barthel, 1965)

Activity	Score
FEEDING	
0 = unable	
5 = need help cutting, spreading butter, etc. or requires modified diet	
10 = independent	_____
BATHING	
0 = dependent	
5 = independent (or in shower)	_____
GROOMING	
0 = need help with personal care	
5 = independent face/hair/teeth/shaving (implements provided)	_____
DRESSING	
0 = dependent	
5 = need help but can do about half unaided	
10 = independent (including buttons, zips, laces, etc.)	_____
BOWELS	
0 = incontinent (or need to be given enemas)	
5 = occasional accident	
10 = continent	_____
BLADDER	
0 = incontinent, or catheterized and unable to manage alone	
5 = occasional accident	
10 = continent	_____
TOILET USE	
0 = dependent	
5 = need some help, but can do something alone	
10 = independent (on and off, dressing, wiping)	_____
TRANSFERS (BED TO CHAIR AND BACK)	
0 = unable, no sitting balance	
5 = major help (one or two people, physical), can sit	
10 = minor help (verbal or physical)	
15 = independent	_____
MOBILITY (ON LEVEL SURFACES)	
0 = immobile or < 50 yards	
5 = wheelchair independent, including corners, >50 yards	
10 = walks with help of one person (verbal or physical) >50 yards	
15 = Independent (but may use aid; for example, stick) > 50 yards	_____
STAIRS	
0 = unable	
5 = need help (verbal, physical, carrying aid)	
10 = independent	_____
TOTAL (0-100): _____	

Appendix C – Interview Guide

Introduction

Who I am

Refreshments

Purpose of the Study

Informed Consent

List of Professional Contacts

Pseudonym Choice

Questionnaires

Demographic

Exercise

Functional Ability

Microphone Check

Questions

1. *Why* do you exercise?
 - a. Which of these reasons is most important to you and why?
 - b. Why did you choose to start exercising at this stage in your life? What triggered your decision?
 - c. What has your experience as new exerciser been like?
 - d. How do you think being female has influenced your experience as a new exerciser at this age? (challenges/advantages)
2. *Who* motivates you to exercise? (Yourself and/or others?)
 - a. Of these people (yourself included), who are the most influential in your exercise behaviour?
 - b. Who would you say are the most influential people in your life in general and why?
3. Thinking about your desire for exercise, how does that desire influence the *amount of time* you dedicate to exercise?
 - a. How does it influence the *effort* you put into it?

(Transition: Alright, now I'm going to ask you some questions that sound very similar. I will go through each question asking about 'life in general' and then specifically about your 'exercise' experience. So, first of all...)

4. In what areas of your life *in general* do you feel confident in your abilities?
 - a. When do you feel most confident and why?
 - b. How confident do you feel in your ability to *exercise*? (or how capable do you feel in performing exercise?)
5. Thinking about your life *in general*, in what ways do you feel as though you are in charge of your own decisions and behaviours?
 - a. In what ways do you feel as though you are in charge of your *decision to exercise* and your exercise behaviour?

- i. Do you feel as though you are in charge of the types of exercise you do and how you do it?
6. *In life in general*, are there any situations where you don't mind giving some control to others? Or where you would rather other people make certain decisions for you?
 - a. *As an exerciser*, are there any situations where you don't mind giving control to others?
7. (*Slow*) In what areas of your *life in general* do you experience a strong sense of meaningful connection to other people?
 - a. Now, when thinking about *yourself as an exerciser*, is there anyone who you feel connected to? (for example, other exercisers, staff members, instructors, medical professionals, friends, family).
 - i. Can you describe some of those relationships to me?
8. **(transition) Ok, I have put the three things we were just talking about (confidence in your abilities, being 'in charge' of your decisions and behaviours, and meaningful connections to others) onto three separate cards. For the next question, I would like you to put them in order of how important they are to you. If any of them are equally important, you can put them side by side.**
 - a. (first page) In relation to who you are as a person...
 - i. Why did you put them in this order?
 - b. (second page) In life in general? Or how the world views it?
 - i. Why did you put them in this order?
 - ii. Do you see a link between these three things and your *motivation* in life in general? Please describe.
 - c. (third page) In relation to being an exerciser?
 - i. Why did you put them in this order?
 - ii. Do you see a link between these three things and your *motivation* for exercise? Please describe.
9. In general, how would you describe your mental well-being? (Could be improved? Satisfactory? Thriving?)
 - a. How about when you are exercising?
 - b. After exercising?
10. When you feel as though you are having a really good day, mentally, does it matter to you if:
 - a. On that day your exercise performance isn't as good as usual? Please explain.
 - b. On that day you don't experience as much control over your exercise as usual? Please explain.

- c. On that day you don't experience the meaningful connections to others that you normally would through exercise? Please explain.
11. **(Transition) Take a minute now to close your eyes and think about how you felt before you came to the YMCA today. Think about what you did this morning, the things you had to deal with, who you talked to, the thoughts and feelings that were on your mind (positive or negative)?**
 - a. How capable did you feel? Please explain/examples
 - b. How 'in charge' did you feel? Please explain/examples
 - c. How connected did you feel to others? Please explain/examples
 12. **(Transition) Now close your eyes again and think about how you felt *while* you were exercising and the time *shortly after* you finished. Think about the activities you did, the people you saw, how your body felt, the emotions you felt...**
 - a. How capable did you feel? Please explain/examples
 - b. How 'in charge' did you feel? Please explain/examples
 - c. How connected did you feel to others? Please explain/examples
 13. Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you would like to mention?
 14. Is there anything we have talked about that you would like to touch on again or clarify?

Conclusion

Thank-you

Gift

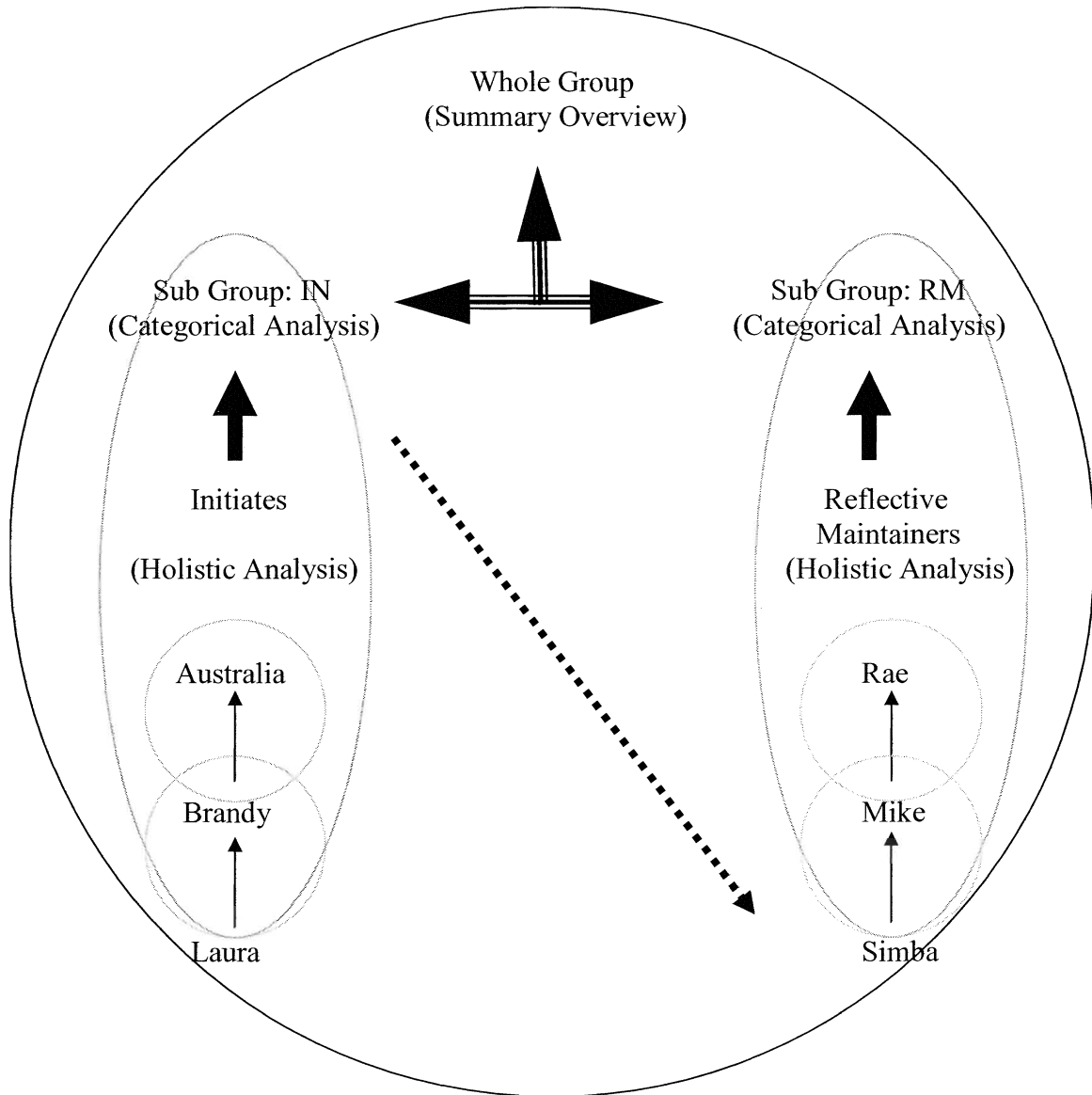
Appendix D – Need Value Board and Cue Cards

Cue Cards

Confidence in Your Abilities	Meaningful Connections to Others	Being “In Charge” of Your Decisions & Behaviours
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1st			
2nd			
3rd			

Appendix E – Application of the Hermeneutic Circle



Appendix F – Reflexive Journal

Part A: Personal Biography of the Researcher.

The primary investigator in this study is a 25 year old female who is a regular exerciser (engages in moderate to vigorous intensity exercise in the forms of yoga, running, and inline or ice skating -dependent upon season- for at least 30 minutes per day, 6 days per week) with a keen interest in preventive health behaviours and how they relate to aging and psychological processes. Prior to completing a graduate level course on qualitative inquiry preceding the data collection for this study, this researcher had no practical experience in conducting qualitative research, as such the members of her committee played an integral role in this aspect of the project design and development at all stages.

The secondary investigator is an Associate Professor of Physical Education and Kinesiology and the primary investigator's graduate supervisor. The secondary investigator is physically active on a daily basis, engaging in mild to moderate intensity activities such as walking, resistance exercise, and elliptical training. The secondary investigator is male, a former professional athlete, and a recognized expert in SDT with no previous published research examining motivational processes from a qualitative perspective.

Part B: Practice Interviews

January 10th, 2008Practice Interview 1

Participant: Male, aged 26, moderately active

Location: Birmingham, England, The United Kingdom

Interview Guide: Draft 2

Total Length of Interview: 1 hour 58 minutes (not including questionnaires)

Brief Overview of the Process: For this initial practice interview, I decided to go through each question verbatim (regardless of whether or not previous questions elicited answers to other questions) to ensure that all questions were addressed for clarity. I am keeping an open mind that some questions may be dropped if they are too repetitive or reworded if unclear. As such, this instalment will be organized by question number.

Introduction: I did not provide a formal introduction into the interview as I would in a real interview situation. Thinking ahead, it would probably be a good idea to prepare even for the less technical aspects of the interview process and will include a full formal introduction for the next practice interview. I did, however, explain that they could feel free to ask for clarification and that I will be asking them about questions that compare their experiences in general life with their experiences in exercise.

Question 1: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 2: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 3: There was some confusion between this question and Question 2 due to similar wording. For the next practice interview, I will either reword the question to make it distinct or collapse it into being part of Question 2.

Question 4: After asking Questions 2 and 3, Question 4 seemed too repetitive as the participant offered the answer while responding to the previous questions. In a real interview scenario, I would thus skip onto the next question. I am considering, however, changing the format of Questions 2-4 so that they appear more unified to my eye as I am interviewing.

Question 5: This question elicited the same responses as Question 1 and, upon revisiting the interview guide, I have decided that the question is essentially redundant when placed in this order. For the second practice interview I will ask this question first with the original Question 1 being used for addressing the more specific detail of age.

Question 6: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 7: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 8: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process. The answer to this question was partially touched on by the participant in the previous question.

Question 9: The only problem I experienced in this question was that when asking about decisions in life in general, the participant reverted back to the context of exercise. This problem may have been unique to this participant, but I am going to try to find a way of rewording the question so that it is clear that I am asking about two different contexts.

Question 10: The participant had a problem with the use of the word “effort”. I don’t think that this means I should change the wording of the question, as further questioning revealed that he felt his “effort” didn’t change within or between exercise bouts, which is just a different way of saying that he feels his desire for exercise does not affect the amount of effort he puts into exercise. He preferred the words “commitment” and “endurance” instead. Though these concepts are different to “effort”, I will keep these words in mind if other participants struggle with this question in a similar way.

Question 11: I found it was easier to communicate this question by stating immediately beforehand that I would be asking about life in general and then exercise specifically, otherwise I end up having to read the question to the participant multiple times which may be able to be avoided.

Question 12: I realized that this question is almost identical to Question 9 and I may have accidentally repeated myself when writing the guide. I will likely drop Question 9, as the idea behind the question is placed more logically alongside Questions 11 and 13.

Question 13: I need to specify more clearly that I am asking about life in general first in this question and then exercise. I was able to return to some of the previous answers he had given while discussing this question which was good for challenging my attention to their responses, but am not entirely certain that this question is really integral to the project and am considering removing it.

Question 14: I needed to repeat this question, but not reword it. For part b the participant couldn’t think of any examples other than friends and family so I prompted them to think about other people that are potentially encountered through exercise (such as other exercisers, staff members, instructors, and medical professionals). To maintain consistency, I will also prompt other participants, as not everyone may automatically consider these individuals to be related to exercise though they may feel that they have meaningful connections to them. Also, in part c the participant was confused about what I meant by “exercise” –whether I’m talking about ‘performance’ or ‘motivation’, etc. I will need to rework this one.

Question 15: I think this question would make more sense if I said part a before asking the body of the question. I also think the use of cue cards for “confidence in your abilities”, “being in charge of your decisions and behaviours”, and “meaningful connections to others” (i.e. the 3 needs) would be helpful for Questions 15-20. It is a lot to try and organize in one’s mind when answering the question, so it might be easier for them if I can point to the one I’m talking about to reduce confusion. Then they can manipulate the cards themselves in Question 16 instead of having to arrange their thoughts in their mind and communicate them simultaneously.

Question 16: Going through each ‘need’ individually made this question easier.

Question 17: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 18: In part a, the word ‘ability’ should probably be replaced with ‘exercise performance’. In part b, the word ‘experience’ would probably be better used than ‘have as much’. This question elicited a lot of very short answers and would be a good place to ask for examples (“can you think of a time when this has happened?”) and ‘negative’ questions (opposite scenarios, for example: “on a bad day...”).

Question 19: This question had to be asked hypothetically, as the interview was not being conducted at a YMCA or directly after an exercise bout. There were no concerns with regards to the participant understanding the question.

Question 20: This question had to be asked hypothetically, as the interview was not being conducted at a YMCA or directly after an exercise bout. There were no concerns with regards to the participant understanding the question.

Question 21: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 22: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Thoughts and Reflections:

The interview guide: With the interview guide arranged the way it is, I find myself speaking as though I am reading a list and need to work on transitions between questions. This participant was very open with their responses and spoke in great detail which may have been one of the reasons why some questions seemed repetitive. A less talkative participant may have needed the additional questions to address the same issues, so I am not going to throw any questions out in their entirety just yet. Rather, I will move them around in hopes of finding a more appropriate/useful order for the questions. I also don’t think that I am asking enough about the “initiate” experience and will keep this in mind when revising the interview guide. The interview went considerably longer than I had planned and am claiming in the promotion of the study. As such, I will re-evaluate

which questions are truly essential to the study, which ones can be logically combined, and what order would be more efficient.

My interview technique: With such an open participant, I found myself becoming a bit passive as an investigator, which isn't a good habit to get into. I also need to ask for more examples when they are answering questions. In performing this practice interview I also came to the realization that I have not been asking "negative" questions, meaning that I have not been asking about scenarios where they "didn't" do something or "didn't" feel something and will take this into consideration when revising the interview guide for the second practice interview.

January 15, 2008

Practice Interview 2

Participant: Male, 24 years old, new exerciser

Location: Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Interview Guide: Draft 3

Total Length of Interview: 35 minutes (not including questionnaires)

Brief Overview of the Process: For this practice interview I began with a formal introduction to the interview process, taking the participant hypothetically through each step (purpose, rights, informed consent, questionnaires, and interview details). I used Draft 3 of the interview guide for questioning the participant. I also employed the use of cue cards to represent the three needs (as proposed in my entry following Practice Interview 1) in Questions 8-12.

Question 1: With the exception of part d, this series of questions was clear and well understood by the participant. So much so that they elicited mostly short (3-4 word) and direct-to-the-point answers. After a few pokes and prods, however, the participant realized that I was looking for more depth and detail and became more thorough in their responses and descriptions. With regards to part d, the participant argued that gender was irrelevant to the experiences of new exercisers. I was rather quick to counter the statement though, in retrospect, it probably would have been advantageous to allow the participant time to explain why they felt that way, as it may have shed light on new insight. I did, however, explain to them that some people feel that an individual's experiences may differ because of certain challenges or benefits that may or may not be related to gender. This seemed to make sense to them. I do think I might be able to word the question a little more clearly though, and will attempt to do so in the next draft of the Interview Guide.

Question 2: This was an interesting question for me as an investigator, as there were many opportunities for me to ask "why not?" questions. In other words, the people that the participant mentioned in part a were not the same people as part b and this naturally led me to ask "why?". Otherwise, the question was clear to the participant and did not raise any concerns with regards to the progress of the interview.

Question 3: There was a little bit of confusion with this question as the participant thought I was asking about ‘effort’ (part b) when I had been asking about ‘amount’ of exercise. Thus, it may be better for me to say “amount of time” instead. I will try this in the next practice interview.

Question 4: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 5: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process. I do think the question would be more encompassing if I added “and your exercise behaviour” to the end of it and will try that in the next draft of the interview guide.

Question 6: This question worked well as the participant had already touched on the idea when answering Question 5.

Question 7: This is the only question that I had to repeat and that was likely due to the fact that there were a lot of words and I said them rather quickly. As such, I will include a reminder to myself to slow down when I read this question in the next draft of the interview guide.

Question 8: The transition that I included worked amazingly well and made Question 8 much easier to go through and answer. By presenting the three concepts (psychological needs) on cue cards and the scenarios (part a, b, and c) on separate boards (pieces of paper that noted the scenario on the top and outlined spaces to arrange the cards), the participant seemed more engaged in the answering of the question. This may possibly be because the cue cards helped them in the visual organization of their thoughts. To compliment the explanation of the activity, I also demonstrated how it worked. I found that this also helped me as the investigator, as having both the visual and aural information made it easier for me to analyze what the participant was saying and draw comparisons between the different scenarios, which in turn aided me in the generation of more meaningful follow up questions.

Question 9: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 10: I didn’t experience many difficulties with this series of questions, though I think part c could be worded more effectively and will make an attempt to improve it in the next draft. I think it would also be helpful to use the cue cards in this question because it would help to really draw their attention to each need individually.

Question 11: Because I really want them to focus in on how they felt before they came to the YMCA, I think it would be helpful to incorporate a basic imagery approach with this question. In other words, I could ask them to close their eyes and revisit the events of the morning, who they talked to, how they felt, etc. Then ask about the three needs. I think part c could be worded a bit better as well and will reword it in the next draft of the interview guide.

Question 12: I think a similar tactic as was described for Question 11 would be useful for Question 12. This time, however, it would be addressing what they did, who they saw, and how they felt as they exercised that day. In both Question 11 and 12 I think it might be a good idea to probe for examples of times when their feelings/experiences were in opposition to how they felt that day.

Question 13: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 14: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Thoughts and Reflections:

The interview guide: This guide felt much better and I feel that it flowed much more logically than the second draft. I think, however, I would like to physically structure it in the way that I had done for my SP17 interview. I had designed that guide so that there were a list of generic follow up questions listed at the bottom for me to use as prompts for myself during the interview and space on the right hand side to make notes. The cue cards for Questions 8-12 worked wonderfully. I could see from the concentrated look on the participant's face that they were fully engaged in developing their answer to the question instead of struggling to discern what the question was, mentally organize their thoughts, and then retrieve them in order (as was the case in Practice Interview 1).

My interview technique: In reflecting on the introduction, I was happy with the way I approached the participant and explained the various steps of the process. I have realized, however, that including a practice conclusion (giving thanks, the gift, and the list of professional contacts) would be helpful and I will include this in the next practice interview. I also think including a checklist of the various steps of the process would be beneficial so that I can ensure that I do not miss any steps. This will also help, if needed, to demonstrate for the members of my committee (who will not be present at the interviews) that I did perform each step.

During this interview I found myself to be more comfortable with the questions and was better able to think of meaningful follow up/clarification questions as I was listening to the participant's responses. There were only a few occasions where I had to repeat/reword a question which leads me to believe that I was successful in restructuring the questions from Draft 2. I think that including the follow up prompts on my interview guide will help me dig deeper into the participants' responses, thus improving the amount of detail obtained and the ability to create thick description.

January 17th, 2008

Practice Interview 3

Participant: Female, 27, a former self-professed "exercise junkie"

Location: Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Interview Guide: Draft 4

Total Length of Interview: 1 hour 20 minutes (not including questionnaires)

Brief Overview of the Process: For this third practice interview I used the fourth draft of the interview guide for the questions and included the cue cards and boards for a second time. I checked off the questions as we completed them so that I wouldn't accidentally skip over any. I also placed a check mark next to the type of follow up questions I used so that I could see gauge my activity as an active listener and to see which types of questions I used the most (and which I could be asking more often). I took the participant hypothetically through both a formal introduction and conclusion.

Question 1: This series of questions went very smoothly and there was no need to repeat or reword any part of them. This participant was very receptive to part d and spoke in great detail about how they felt their gender played a role in their experience as a new exerciser.

Question 2: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 3: The participant felt that this was a difficult question for them to answer. Not because of the way it was structured, but because of how it related to their life. I found this to be a very intriguing way to answer a question.

Question 4: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 5: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 6: For this question, I think it might be a good idea to add the word 'some' before 'control', otherwise the situation seems too extreme and may limit the responses given.

Question 7: This question appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any challenges to the interview process.

Question 8: The cue cards and scenario boards were once again a valuable asset in pursuing this series of questions. It was interesting to watch the participant manipulate the cards as she explained. They did this because they felt that certain cards could/should be placed in multiple places. They also commented on how they liked this method over answering yes/no questions on a questionnaire because they felt that there was no right/wrong answer. They felt comfortable answering the question because they were able to create the picture instead of having to conform to a preset method of answering.

In answering the question about 'life in general', the participant used the words 'how the world views it'. This struck me as being a much better way of presenting this particular question. As such, I have placed it alongside 'life in general' for future interviews. Furthermore, in future interviews, I think it would be a good idea for me to

document the placement of the cards and will do so on the back of the first sheet of the interview guide. This is a logical place to record them as I will have already turned the page at this point in the interview, leaving me able to look at both at the same time.

Question 9: The participant chose not to answer this question. As the investigator I complied and we moved on to the next question.

Question 10: This series of questions appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any problems to the interview process.

Question 11: This series of questions appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any problems to the interview process.

Question 12: This series of questions appeared to be understood by the participant but they felt they were unable to respond properly because they had been suffering from an unusual physical pain that day which had impaired the way she felt emotionally/mentally that morning. This was a good exercise for me as an investigator. I allowed her to refrain from answering the question, but it may have been better to perhaps ask about her days in general or about how she felt the last time she came in. Either way, I will have to be consistent in the way I approach this type of situation.

Question 13: This series of questions appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any problems to the interview process.

Question 14: This series of questions appeared to be understood by the participant and did not present any problems to the interview process.

Thoughts and Reflections:

The interview guide: I imagine the cycle of practice interviewing and interview guide revision could continue endlessly. With each new practice participant comes new insight and ways to reword questions, ways to approach topics, and ideas I hadn't thought of previously. The act of interviewing has been challenging (as expected) and fun. As such, I am looking forward to starting the 'real' interviews, though I understand that I will possibly be asked to complete more practice interviews before commencing.

The guide itself, in my opinion, has come a long way through these practice interviews and I am very pleased with how it flows and the depth of the answers it produces.

My interview technique: Having the cues on the bottom of guide was a great help. Being a novice interviewer, it is sometimes difficult for me to think of follow up questions in the moment. Knowing that I could just glance down at the prompts when I was stuck, helped support my confidence as an investigator and freed up my mind so that I could pay more attention to what the participant was saying. I imagine that simply the act of practicing interviewing and becoming familiar with the guide was also a big help. This particular interview was perhaps my favourite of the three. It went so smoothly and I found myself feeling much more engaged in the discussion and less like I was simply reading of a list. I feel as though I was asking more questions and better questions.

With regards to the introduction and conclusion, I did include them, but think it may be a good idea for me to add the different steps (i.e. informed consent, pseudonym choice, questionnaires, etc.) into the interview guide. Since I am checking off the questions, I might as well include those checklist items with the interview guide. It will keep me better organized and the fewer the pages I have to sift through during the interview, the better.

Part C: Recruitment

February 10th, 2008
Meeting

Membership Team

Today I attended the YMCA membership team meeting to introduce myself, give a brief explanation of the study, and to explain to the recruiters what it is they need to do. I think I should have made a checklist of things I needed to cover before going in. Though I did go over what I wanted to say several times in my head, when it came time to do the presentation I was interrupted with questions and then forgot where I had left off. As a result, I don't think I did as good of a job explaining the purpose of the study as I could have and I could have done a better job of taking them through the process of recruitment. If I had had a checklist, the chances of forgetting to elaborate on things would have been reduced. **Lesson Learned:** Create an outline when there are no slides to guide me in a presentation!

February 11th, 2008
Class- 2:15pm

Aqua Fit

Today I went to the Aqua fit class to try and recruit some participants. I managed to grab the attention of one lady and am very excited to be doing my first interview this coming Monday. She had suggested we do it today (right after her class), which would have been ideal, but I didn't have the materials I needed with me. **First Lesson Learned:** Bring EVERYTHING even if I'm just recruiting. It's probably better to get them right away, or else they might change their mind. She also mentioned that she is very busy and doesn't have a lot of spare time. That comment reminded me of a study I had read... I wish I could remember which one... which basically said the same thing. Though we generally think of retirement as a time of relaxation and tons of free time, that often isn't the case for many seniors who take advantage of their new found freedom. **Second Lesson Learned:** I should make sure that I tell them that it doesn't matter if they have been exercising for a long time, because this lady only ended up volunteering because she had said "I can't do it, I've only just started this" and I explained to her that she was exactly the kind of person we were looking for. If she hadn't said that, I may never have been able to recruit her. I had gone in thinking I would just announce 'female exercisers 65 and over' so that there would be a broader pool (no pun intended) to choose from. As a result, she didn't consider herself to be an 'exerciser' yet because she was "new to this"- something I will have to keep in mind for future recruitment.

The act of presenting my self and my study was a little difficult at the pool side, as there was a lot going on around us. As such, I had to use my "gym" voice, but even that didn't capture everyone's attention, so I may need to try and target one or two people at a

time in the pool. I also felt a bit like an outsider... at this stage, I really am. I think I am going to have to try and employ strategies that make me appear more like an insider if I'm really going to sell this to them.

February 15th, 2008

Today was very exciting. Up until this point I have been dressing as a student, trying to look professional so that people will take me seriously (as I am aware that I look fairly young ... some people still occasionally mistake me for being a high school student). It could have been nerves or my awareness of my inexperience that made me feel a bit out of place last time, but I think the way I appear to them physically plays an important role in how they will respond to me. I will probably have to gain their trust and respect before they will agree to sit down with me for an hour and a half and so this time around I decided to dress as an 'exerciser' instead of a 'student'. This strategy was a HUGE door opener for me today. First of all, when I arrived and stopped in to see the centre's manager, she cracked a joke and asked if I was going to be going to a class. When I explained my 'dressing' strategy to her, she insisted that I participate in any classes that I wanted and told me that it will give me the opportunity to casually chat with the ladies and develop a rapport with them. Though I felt a little bad because I'm not paying to be there like all the others, I couldn't refuse this offer. **Lesson Learned:** Dress the part of an insider.

Yoga Fit Class- 10:45am

So I introduced myself to the Yoga Fit instructor and she was more than happy to have me, even though I had to duck out early to recruit at the next Aqua Fit class. I felt much better about my presentation to the class this time. I've decided that it works better when I get into the details at the end. So for instance, instead of telling them my full name, the department I'm with, and the population I'm looking for, I start by saying that my name is Meghan and I'm from Brock University and that Brock and the YMCA are looking for volunteers to participate in interviews about their experiences as exercisers. This is short and to-the-point and doesn't exclude anybody yet. I found before that when I started off by saying *who* I'm looking for, all the young women and all the men would wander off, not giving me the chance to suggest that their mothers/spouses/neighbours might be interested. Then I describe their level of commitment by telling them its "only a one time thing: one interview". I think this is a major strength about my study, as far as recruiting goes. The centre manager was telling me about the painstaking difficulties they had when trying to recruit women of all ages to participate in a longitudinal study this year. I am able to sell my study by promoting the one-time commitment. Then I tell them about the benefits/rewards of participating: \$10 grocery store gift card, refreshments, \$5 donation to strong kids- I got a thumbs-up from a member of the Yoga Fit class for that one. Then, at the end, I tell them that the only requirements are that they be female, exercisers (new or experienced, but can reflect on their experiences as a new

exerciser), and 65 years of age or older (without eye-balling anyone to make them feel old). **Lesson Learned:** Start broad then narrow in when pitching the study.

Something I said, that I will refrain from in the future, was “to make the deal sweeter I will donate \$5 to the YMCA Strong Kids foundation”... after saying that I realized how business-like it sounded. One thing I remember very clearly during my recruitment for my undergraduate thesis was that several of the older adults were reluctant to participate because they thought I was going to ask for their bank information and ‘do them in’. What I need to do is show them *why* they should participate without it coming across as a sneaky business deal that sounds too good to be true and therefore shouldn’t be trusted. From my experience as a franchise owner, I have learned not to trust business people, so I should make an effort to take the useful (and honest) lessons I learned but apply them in a way that doesn’t reflect a business persona. I have decided instead to say “as a thank-you for your time, I will be...” when introducing the benefits of participation. **Lesson Learned:** Treat it like a business without making it *sound* like a business.

This crowd will be a tough sell. According to the instructor, there weren’t as many people as usual (possibly due to the long weekend). Most gave me the impression that they ‘weren’t interested’, one said they ‘would think about it’, and another said they would ‘love to, but are too young’ (63 years old). I think if I keep coming back to this class they might warm up to me and not view me as a total stranger.

Aqua Fit 11:15am

Learning from my previous attempts, I tackled this 2nd Aqua Fit class with a better approach. Instead of standing around by the walls waiting for the instructor to introduce me, I started talking to one of the ladies in the water (partially by accident, I thought she was the person I had recruited last time and wanted to confirm some details for our interview... it turned out that she wasn’t the person I thought she was, but it was a great chance for me to segue into my spiel... and it worked! She is my second official recruit and we will be interviewing on Wednesday. **Lesson Learned:** Pretend a potential participant is someone I have already spoken to, it provides some comic relief and will guarantee I have their attention while pitching the study.

When the instructor introduced me (as I think I will have them do for the first time I approach a new class) I felt much more confident and the presentation went much more smoothly, though I didn’t get any definite ‘yes’s, I did get an ‘I’m too old’ (which I tried to convince her otherwise with some humour, but haven’t yet won her over) and an ‘I’d love to, but I’m too young’ (she is 62). I’m thinking I may need to see if the age range can be widened for the study and so I took her name for future reference.

Downtime 11:30-2:10pm

With my newly developing insider-ness I came up with the idea that it would be better for me to spend my down time in the lobby of the YMCA instead of running errands or reading in my car. Not to actively recruit, but to make myself more visible to the people I had approached, as well as the people I was about to approach at 2:15pm. On my last visit, I had noticed a key couple of tables where the Aqua Fit ladies typically hang

out before their class and I decided to park myself in that area (which also conveniently put me in the view of the yoga students as they exited the building). This was a good decision. Though most of the interaction I had while seated there was with the instructors of the two classes I had been at (I invited the Aqua Fit instructor to spend her lunch break with me), many of the participants saw me, some waved, two came over to chat (even though they didn't fit the population I was looking for. One of them even invited me to come to the Gentle Fit class on Wednesday and they are now expecting me to be there), and several ended up sitting near by. I'm hoping that they heard some of the conversation that I shared with the Aqua Fit instructor so that they can see that I'm really not that scary. I think it will be very beneficial for me to befriend the instructors and classmates, as they have more influence over the potential participants than I do. If they appear to trust and like me, the participants may also be more inclined to. They may also be more likely to promote my study and introduce me to specific individuals if they like me.

Lesson Learned: When in Rome, do as the Romans do.

Aqua Fit 2:15pm

Feeling very pleased and much more confident, I didn't wait for the instructor to even arrive before I started approaching participants. This time I tried employing a new strategy. Because I was aware that it was difficult to hear me in the pool area, I approached two ladies who were wading by the edge of the pool, waiting for class to start. I excused myself and asked them if they remembered me from Monday's class. I explained that I knew it was difficult to hear in the pool area and asked them if they had been able to hear me when I spoke on Monday. It turned out that they hadn't been able to hear me and asked me if I was going to be leading the lesson today (based on my insider apparel!) and that allowed me to explain why I wasn't leading the lesson and why I actually was there.

Lesson Learned: Ask a non-study specific question to initiate a conversation that will allow me to introduce my study and pitch it to them. The two ladies were very interested, but I didn't have a chance to obtain their names and numbers because, as I was conversing with them, the instructor (whom I had not yet introduced myself to and probably wasn't aware of why I was there) had started the lesson (which prevented me from giving my presentation). The ladies and I quickly decided that we would take up the conversation again during Wednesday's class. I'm hoping they will approach me, because I am horrible with remembering faces... though this might provide me with another chance to use the "other person I talked to" strategy again! **Lesson Learned:** Keep my eye out for the instructor.

February 19th, 2008

Aqua Fit 2:15pm

Feeling a bit paranoid after the completion of my first interview (I was fearful that the participant didn't have as enjoyable an experience as I had hoped they would- see reflexive journal Part C interview 1- and was afraid that they would spread this potential news to the others in her class) I hurried into the Aqua Fit class to try and round up some more recruits. Now that most of the participants have seen me around a few times, I feel more comfortable joking around with them and trying to make them feel comfortable

around me. I thought it would be a good idea to update them on the progress of the study (how many people have signed up) because if I can show them that other people are doing it then they might feel more comfortable jumping on the band wagon too. It also gave me something else to talk about with them instead of the same speech over again. Though I imagine it is a combination of several of the tactics I have been employing, this addition seemed to have helped because 2 more participants have signed up- a much needed boost of confidence for me. **Lesson Learned:** Let potential recruits know how many people have already become involved.

February 20th, 2008

Gentle Fit 10:45am

This morning was the second time that I participated in a fitness class with the participants I was trying to recruit. It was also the first time I was recruiting at a Gentle Fit class. One of the individuals from the Yoga class who stopped in to visit with me on the 15th was also in this class and she introduced me to the class instructor, who seemed very enthusiastic about my project. There were a few late arrivers, but I will attempt to reach them again at the beginning of Friday's class. Participating was a lot of fun, and interacting with the potential recruits allowed them to get a feel of what I'm like. There was even an exercise that required us to change partners and introduce ourselves to someone new. The centre manager popped in to see how things were going and started laughing when we made eye-contact. I imagine it was an amusing sight: This struggling 20-something student, sweating to the oldies with 15 elderly men and women (the instructor was also likely in her 50s), all in an effort to demonstrate a likeable character to a group of strangers out of the desperation of needing participants for her study. So pathetic, it's funny.

The group waved goodbye when I had to leave early to recruit from the next Aqua Fit class, but my efforts were not in vain; 2 Gentle Fitters signed up for my study as I greeted them on their way out when the class was over and I had returned from the Aqua Fit class. I was going to use that time to set up for my next interview, but thought it might be a good idea to just show my face again and ask them how the class had gone as they headed out the door. **Lesson Learned:** Approach them at the beginning *and* end of the class, even if just to chat.

The more I participate in these classes, the more I wish I had my own membership! The atmosphere is so welcoming and laid back and there is so much freedom and choice with regards to your options for mode of exercise (membership gives you access to virtually all facilities and programs). The personal trainers are much more affordable (sometimes free) than what I have seen at other gyms/clubs and there is plenty of parking, access by bus, and tons of child care services. I was aware of much of this from working at one of the outdoor YMCA day camps a few summers ago, and this outreach approach was one of the reasons I wanted to pursue my study at a YMCA, but I had never actually experienced the Y's true 'community' atmosphere until beginning my recruitment. **Thought:** I wonder if class attendance rates are better at places like the YMCA in comparison to other fitness clubs which often charge you extra for specialty classes and require you to register for each one?

Aqua Fit 11:15am

This attempt went pretty well. Not only did I recruit one from the class, but the instructor forwarded a sign up sheet to me that had been left by another member (I had left some sign up sheets in the pool office). I haven't heard of any recruits from the membership desk yet, so it's a good thing I was planning to do in-class announcements! I will check up with the membership coordinator to make sure none have come in yet. This trend doesn't surprise me though. Based on my experiences and training in the 'business' world, it is much more effective to try and make a 'cold call' sale in person (as opposed to over the phone, by mail, etc.) because it allows you to develop rapport with the potential client and find out what their needs are so that you can be accommodating and, in turn, convince them to choose your services. The instructor also had the music shut off while I made the announcement, which made a big difference with the number of people who could hear me and remained listening to me for the duration of my talk. **Lesson Learned:** Ask the instructor to turn the music off.

February 22nd, 2008

Yoga Fit 10:45am

This class is holding as the most difficult one to break into and it certainly has been the most difficult to participate in! Though I do yoga on my own at home, the exercises that the instructor gives us are very different from what my body has become trained to do and so it feels like I'm starting over from scratch; perhaps an appropriate experience to be having given that I am trying to understand the 'initiate' experience.

There were a few new faces and they seemed receptive, but did not sign up. I did notice a lady who had been walking around the track during the yoga class though and I approached her as I was leaving. She was very enthusiastic and signed up. It will be good to have someone who isn't a part of a class on board. I ended up missing my chance to recruit at the beginning of the 11:15 Aqua Fit class because I was chatting with her and explaining the study, but it was definitely worth it. Later I went down to the pool in hopes of being able to recruit at the end of class, but there weren't many people and the only older women were people that had already signed up.

Aqua Fit 2:15pm

The response in this class was good. Many are familiar faces, so I am able to chat with people a bit. There was a lady there today who was just sitting off to the side and I approached her but discovered through my conversation with her that she was too young for the study. When I made my announcement in the class one of my recruits came up and asked if she could change the time. When one of her friends saw her do this she swam over and said "are you doing this?" and when she heard "yes" she said "well then I'll do it too!". **Lesson Learned:** keep going back! Just because people say no (or don't show interest) the first time, doesn't mean they won't change their mind if they see that their friends are doing it.

So now I have ten participants. I want more 'initiates' though, so I'm going to keep trying. I will be at the facility to do interviews anyway. To accomplish this I might try just starting my talk by asking for a show of hands of which people are new exercisers (started less than 6 months ago) and taking them off to the side to talk to. If I had done

this from the beginning it probably would have been fairly effective because they would have assumed I was working for the Y (as many have thus far).

Part D: Interviews

February 19th, 2008 12:50pm

Preliminary Interview: 1
 Laura: 77 years of age
 Location: Chapel Room
 Length of Interview: 65 minutes

I made sure that I left home extra early so that I would have enough time to pick up the refreshments and gift card that the participant had requested. It was a good thing that I had. Not only was traffic backed up on the QEW but when picking up the refreshments, I forgot to pick up the gift card (I'm attributing this inattention to the numerous interruptions I encountered while trying to sleep last night). After returning to the grocery store, only to find out that you can't buy gift certificates with credit or debit there, I physically ran to the nearest bank and back to take care of the matter. The exercise also helped to revive me from my groggy state. Grateful that I had been organized enough to schedule in 'delay' time, I finally returned to the YMCA and set up for my first 'real' interview. Everything was in order and I was content with the way I had organized all of the materials in my binder. Each page was placed in chronological order of when they were to be used (for efficiency to save time) and I had the new and improved (electronically formatted and printed) board and cue cards laid out but upside down, so as not to be a distraction. I decided to keep the board in its page protector so that the cue cards could slide easily over the plastic surface, eliminating the need for the nimble-fingeredness that would be required in order to pick up the cards and move them. I did numerous sound checks with the recorder to verify the best recording settings for the interview (High Quality; Monaural; Low sensitivity; Zoom recording on) and tested recorder placements (In its stand with the display facing me was the best). I also devised make-shift coasters out of some old magazines so that when the participant put her juice bottle down on the table, the recorder would not register the thud and interfere with any of the words she was saying.

The participant arrived early, which was a relief to me because she said she couldn't stay longer than an hour. Arriving early allowed us to get through the informed consent process and some of the questionnaires without cutting into the time we had for the most important questions. At the beginning, "Laura" was very friendly and quite happy to participate. Towards the end, however, I think she was mentally exhausted; she had said that some of the questions were difficult and that she would be happy to forget about them when they were over. Based on my observations of her body language and the answers she gave, I'm confident that she was referring to Question 8. She didn't appear to have any problems placing them in order, but found it very challenging when I asked her to explain *why* she had placed them the way she did. It was tough as a researcher to work with her, not because she wasn't cooperative, but because a lot of her answers were very short and I constantly had to pry for elaboration. I think this questioning was what may have left her feeling a bit unnerved. I tried to be as pleasant as possible and always asked her with a smile on my face. I even joked about the fact that I was asking for so much

detail, but I'm not sure that it really helped. I feel bad because I really enjoy the act of reflecting and analyzing my life, thoughts, and experiences. It didn't really occur to me that other people might not be so interested in doing the same and that it might actually induce stress. As I came to this realization, I tried to remain conscious of it when probing for more detailed answers and tried to be as courteous and non-threatening as possible.

Unfortunately, I did have to modify Questions 11 and 12 to be hypothetical because Laura did not want to meet after her Aqua Fit class and thus the interview had to be conducted prior to. To work around this, I asked to think back to the last time she came to the YMCA. Though not ideal, and may cause some problems with regards to defending its validity (due to time lapse) when comparing participants' answers, it is not the main focus of the project and I felt that it was more important to obtain the general sentiment and beliefs expressed in the answer to help develop *Laura's* story.

All things considered, I think the interview went fairly well. It certainly was challenging from both sides of the table, but I think it was also a good learning experience for both of us.

February 20th, 2008 12:30pm

Preliminary Interview: 2
Simba: 75 years of age
Location: Small Room
Length of Interview: 75 min

Today's interview went MUCH more smoothly than the last one, mainly because the participant was more talkative and appeared to be more open to the task of analyzing one's own thoughts and decisions. While watching Simba perform the activity in Question 8 I noticed that I had typed the words "in control" when I had meant to write "In charge" on the cue card for Autonomy. I will have to make that change before the next interview. In question 2, when talking about people who influence her motivation for exercise it occurred to me that she had been seeking people (as answers) that *directly* influence her motivation and so I put out the idea of people who *indirectly* influence her motivation for exercise and this brought out new possibilities. I will have to make a note to include this on the next draft of the interview guide. It didn't occur to me until afterward, but Simba's interview was good practice for interviewing *reflective maintainers*, but I didn't really treat her like one. In retrospect, I think the way I was posing the question was geared more towards an *initiate*. Since I will be making a distinction in my analysis between the two, it will be important for me to have two approaches prepared for the interviews. Many of the questions do not deal specifically with being an initiate, but I have to remember to ask about how they *had* felt when they were initiates and I need to present some of the questions in the past tense. I have been trying to use the cues on the bottoms of the interview guide sheets to track which follow up questions I use (and to prompt myself to use them at all). I've been finding it difficult though (unlike when I used this strategy during my 5P17 assignment), because I become so engrossed with what they are saying. They are always making eye contact too, so it's hard to turn my eyes toward the sheet while they are speaking. I think I have been asking a lot of questions though (I will try to analyze this while transcribing tomorrow). I just want to make sure that I'm incorporating a variety of follow up questions to promote

a rich, thick description of the phenomena. This interview was held in the small room across from the Chapel Room. It is MUCH smaller, but it didn't seem to cause any difficulty with the set up or sound quality. It is actually probably better because the door automatically locks when the door is shut, so no one can walk in and interrupt. I was going to put up a sign that said "interview in progress, please do not disturb", but the centre manager informed me that no one is allowed to put up signs on the doors unless they are official YMCA signs. That reminds me. I should check up on the posters I put up to see if any tags have been ripped off... just for curiosity.

February 22nd, 2008 1:15pm

Interview: 3

Margaret: 79 years of age

Location: Small Room

Length of Interview: 55 min

I was quite happy to discover that the ethics approval for my modification went through before my first 'real' interview started. That simplified things a lot! I have been filling out the questionnaires for them, with their answers of course, in an effort to save time. From my experience doing my undergrad research, which was entirely questionnaire based, the participants would spend a lot of time reading and writing slowly and chatting between measures and items. I wanted to avoid this because the questionnaire data in this study is secondary to the interview data and is only being used for descriptive purposes and if the questionnaires took 30 minutes to complete, there wouldn't be as much time for the interview questions themselves. With the Barthel Index, however, I decided to let the participant fill this one out because some of the questions (i.e. bowels and bladder) may be embarrassing to have to answer out loud.

The interview itself went reasonably well. We were under a time crunch because she wanted to do the interview before her class (I think from now I on I will tell them that in order to participate, they have to do their interview after the class. I don't like working with this kind of deadline because my mind often floats to "oh no, we only have ___ minutes left" instead of staying focused on the answers they are giving me. Also, I found myself having to skip over potentially interesting follow up questions because I had to make sure I had enough time to get to the questions on my list. Furthermore, two of my questions are geared around their feelings that day before they came and after the class, so it really is better for me to just try and convince them to do it after class.

After the last interview, I made the modifications so that when interviewing reflective maintainers, I was sure to ask them about their experience back when they were initiates... though I was successful in asking the questions, the information I received wasn't as helpful as I had hoped it would be. It shouldn't have surprised me, but her answer to most of the reflective questions was "I don't remember". My heart sank. I don't know what I will do if all of my reflective maintainers are unable to reflect with some confidence on their experiences as initiates. I guess I will just have to keep searching for initiates until I find 10 of them.

February 25th, 2008 10:30 am

Interview 4

Bea: 72 years of age

Location: Small Room

Length of Interview: 75 min

Bea was a very pleasant lady to interview and very keen to participate. I do need to double check on her exercise status though. Her story was a bit complicated as far as time lines go. When speaking with her, I was under the impression that she would be classified as an initiate because she was off for a long time due to medical reasons, but since I have sat down and tried to figure out the timeline it appears as though she is neither an initiate nor a reflective maintainer. She started her exercise program in March of 2006 but had to stop (I need to ask her exactly when) until December to have medical testing done. She then started back in March of 2007 and had been going to the Y everyday until December 2007, took more time off and has only been back for 1 month now. Maybe that makes her more of a reflective maintainer, because she had been exercising for over 6 months before recently taking a month off after Christmas time? I wish I had thought to ask these things *before* sitting down to interview everyone.

The interview questions themselves went over pretty well. She was able to reflect with confidence on her experiences as an initiate (unlike when I spoke with Margaret), so I am a little less worried about my reflective maintainers now. New topics, or approaches, to the questions arose such as 'identity', 'regular vs. gentle classes', and 'listening to one's body'. From what I have heard many of the ladies speaking about, this idea of 'listening to one's body' (often over and above one's instructor) has been an important one, especially when talking about the notion of autonomy in the exercise class. So that is a theme I will keep my eyes and ears out for.

The more I do these interviews, the more I question whether or not I should have been researching 'retirees' instead of 'older adults', because a lot of the comments these ladies make are based on this new lifestyle they have had to adjust to. That would be a 'similar' experience for anyone who has retired and quite frankly I think it would be a more interesting phenomena to study than experiences based on chronological age. Food for thought, I guess.

3:15 pm

Interview 5

Barbara: 75 years of age

Location: Small Room

Length of Interview: 90 min

Barbara was a very interesting person to talk to and has a very inspirational story. Unfortunately, once again, I have interviewed someone that doesn't quite fit into my criteria. Barbara is certainly is a reflective maintainer, but she started her exercise program when she was 60... so 5 years too early to be starting during older adulthood, meaning that I shouldn't have recruited her to begin with.

I will be kicking myself for this until it is over. I feel like such an idiot and am very angry with myself. I have wasted so much time and money because of one stupid mistake that should have been avoided. I feel torn because I feel obligated to use their

data in some fashion because they have offered it to me and are expecting that it will be used and I *want* to use their data because they all have such interesting experiences that we could learn from, but at the same time I *can't* use this information because they don't quite fit into the numerical criteria I said I would be looking for 5 months ago. I don't know what to do. Obviously I have to find more people that do fit the criteria, but what do I do with the ones that don't but have already participated?

In talking to Barbara I have found some more details to add to the interview guide. For instance, when asking Question 1C, I can ask them to differentiate between the psychological and physical experiences of being a new exerciser. When talking about meaningful connections to others, I can ask if those people became their friends before or after they started exercising and build on how that has influenced their experience. The idea of peers (such as exercise classmates) passing away seemed to be a very meaningful topic. This is an experience that is not uncommon for older people to encounter, but is much less common for younger exercisers.

I think Barbara had a little difficulty in understanding what I was asking for when it came to the 'confidence' issue in Questions 8A-C. She didn't have any difficulty ranking them, but when it came to explaining why she ranked them the way she did, I think her decision was based more around how competent she actually felt than how important that feeling of competence is to her. The other two (meaningful connections to others and confidence in one's abilities) didn't seem to have that same problem. I tried explaining what I was looking for ("how confident you *are* and how *important* confidence is to you are two different things") and then asked her if she would change the ranking at all. But she didn't.

February 27, 2008 11:30am

Interview 6

Eleanor: 69 years of age

Location: Small Room

Length of Interview: 105 min

Eleanor was by far the most talkative interviewee I have had to date. It was a very entertaining experience and sometimes challenging. She even told me from the start that she tends to go off on tangents and that I should try to keep her in check. I didn't mind her going somewhat 'off topic', I think it contributed some great examples and valuable information to the study. Many of the things she brought up pertained to some of the other questions as well. After spending an hour on the first two questions, however, I started to rein her in a bit.

Unfortunately, I discovered that Eleanor is not a true reflective maintainer as I thought she was because she started her current exercise program at the age of 63 and had been active in other exercise activity long before then. Because of this, I figured I wouldn't be able to use her data and so I didn't focus on the idea of "back when you started", but focused on some of her life history and current experiences.

I am becoming more aware of myself during the interview process and am finding myself reflecting on the types of questions I am asking while the interview is going on. I found myself asking a lot of closed ended/ confirmation questions with Eleanor, but I don't think this is a bad thing. She had so much to say that I found it was often easier to

try and sum up what she had said and have her confirm my interpretation. I did have to probe her for a good number of 'why's though. I think it started to become a bit overwhelming towards the end, though she handled it much better (with laughter) than Laura. She openly admitted that she doesn't think about these things, so they are kind of difficult to answer.

It has been interesting to observe over the various interviews that many of the ladies have taken time off (several weeks to several months) due to illness, injuries, vacation, other activities, etc. but still identify themselves with being a regular exerciser.

It's too bad that I hadn't been planning to do field observations along with the interviews as part of the study. I have been learning so much about the older female adult exerciser community at the YMCA and it has been very interesting to observe and hear what the ladies are talking about. Often times the ladies will just randomly walk up and start talking to me about exercise and other health related topics.

February 29, 2008 12:30pm

Interview 7

Rae: 81 years of age

Location: Small Room

Length of Interview: 104 min

I arrived at the YMCA for my 8:00 am interview, but the participant did not show up. After waiting a little while, I called her house and discovered that she had become ill with the flu and will have to reschedule. So my first and only interview of the day was with Rae, whom is a true reflective maintainer! Woo hoo! I have even numbers now and am feeling much less frantic. The interview with Rae was probably the best I've had yet. She was very open and eager to answer the questions. I didn't have to pry a lot with her and that certainly made my job easier. It allowed me more time to think about how I could ask for clarification in different ways and to think about which questions would elicit a more detailed response. Basically, it allowed me more time to reflect on what she was saying and how I could, as the investigator, improve the depth of the responses. I may also just be getting better at it with all this practice. Rae, like some of the others, also had a problem with trying to remember back to when she was a new exerciser, but was able to reflect generally on her experience which brought up a new idea. We discussed a bit about how forgetting about the initiate experience, which can be difficult in some ways, had improved her motivation for exercise in the present and that the longer she has stuck with it, the more she probably forgot about the troubles she had had.

March 3rd, 2008

8:00 am

Interview 8

Australia: 66 years of age

Location: Chapel & Small Room

Length of Interview: 140 min

Initially I was planning to use the Small Room for the interview, but it was locked when I arrived at 7:30 this morning and the manager had not arrived yet. After about the first half hour into the interview, however, one of the employees came in and said that the Chapel Room had been booked but that he could open the Small Room for us.

Australia was definitely one of the easiest interviewees to work with yet. She was very clear with her responses which were very descriptive and insightful. She seemed well educated in health matters (mostly self-educated, though she had been a nurse. She reads a lot to stay current with health related knowledge) and seemed more in touch with her thoughts and opinions than most of the other participants. I was lucky to catch her when I did, as she has been exercising for just under 6 months (almost a maintainer!). I felt very relaxed while interviewing her because she spoke a lot, which gave me time to reflect on what she was saying and ask better follow up questions. Over the last couple of interviews I've come to see that sometimes simple prompts like: 'no?' or 'yeah?' will lead them into providing an explanation without me actually having to ask for it. This was a good experience for me and I felt very happy at the end when she said that she had really enjoyed the interview. I have been hoping that all of the participants would have a positive experience, but of course that is not entirely in my control and hasn't always been the case (remembering the 1st interview in particular).

3:15 pm

Interview 9

Murt: 74 years of age

Location: Small Room

Length of Interview: 180 min

Murt is definitely an interesting character. Unfortunately for her, she was having pain in her hip today which caused her to leave her exercise program early. It was interesting for me as the investigator however, because I was able to ask her to reflect on that. Murt definitely loves to talk and this presented me with a number of challenges. 1) She often times went completely off topic and I would try to politely guide her back. This was the longest interview yet and though it was very interesting talking about a variety of topics with her, not a lot of it actually applies to the study and I'm afraid I won't be able to use a lot of it. Actually, she is another one who doesn't fit neatly into either the reflective maintainer or initiate categories, so I can't really use her data at all for this study. 2) Several of the stories she relayed to me were about people in her social network who had been involved in criminal activities (thankfully on the good side of the law). I felt very awkward when listening to these because I felt that I should let her have the opportunity to complete her story because it was obviously important to her, but in the back of my mind I was debating whether I should ask her to stop or if I would just take the liberty of striking that information from the record when it came time to transcribe the interview. Despite becoming a bit emotional over topics close to her heart (I could see tears starting to well up in her eyes, but she didn't let them get the best of her. Looking back, this has happened a couple of times now particularly when discussed people who have passed away – understandably so), she said at the end that she had enjoyed the interview experience and told me that I was a good interviewer (that made me feel good).

March 4th, 2008

Interview 10

Brandy: 77 Years of age

Location: Small Room

Length of Interview: 139 min

The interview with Brandy went very well. She is the third initiate that I have worked with. We did not have to deal with any distractions/interruptions and the process itself went very smoothly. I find myself feeling much more comfortable with interviewing. I never really felt very nervous or anxious about it, but I find myself becoming better able to reflect on what I'm asking and what they are saying in response. Brandy was one of several participants who had mentioned that some of the questions were 'hard' or 'difficult' to answer. This didn't prevent her or any of the others from answering though and I think some of them really enjoyed the challenge. I, of course, started wondering if maybe I could have worded the question better (maybe I could have!), or if it was a reasonable question to be asking at all. I think the biggest struggle was not in the question itself, but the fact that many of the participants simply hadn't *thought* about these things before and were then in a situation where they had to provide an answer on the spot. It's funny for me because, being someone who studies SDT, I think about these things all the time. I'm curious as to whether or not these ladies will continue thinking about their psychological needs now that the ideas have been introduced (though not explained) to them. I wonder if they will be more conscious of these things in their exercise behaviour and their day to day lives?

March 5th, 2008

Interview 11

Today's interview had to be cancelled due to inclement weather conditions, but has been rescheduled for March 12th.

March 12th, 2008

Interview 11

Mike: 80 Years of age

Location: Small Room

Length of Interview: 81 Minutes

Today's interview went well. Mike (the pseudonym *she* chose) was very talkative and was very easy to work with. She had lots of stories to recount and was very eager to respond to questions and didn't have too much difficulty justifying her answers. I felt very relaxed while I was there; perhaps because I'm getting the hang of it. After having transcribed one full interview, I was more mindful of my vocalization. Though I didn't completely refrain from laughing, giggling, and just being myself, I tried not to be so loud when doing so, because the microphone in the recorder seems to pick my voice up better than the participants' and I didn't want my nuances to interfere with the information I was trying to obtain. From listening to myself in the first interview and being more aware of myself today, I have observed that the best probing 'questions' for me to ask are more like statements than actual questions. For example, simply saying 'mhmhm', or 'yeah?', or 'no?', or 'really?' often triggered them to dive into an explanation without me 'leading' them to anything. It also means that *they* spent more time talking instead of me... not that I was talking *more* than them. Mike actually mentioned a couple of times that she thought she was "talking [my] ear off". I think she felt that way because I hardly spoke at all and probably figured I would *want* to talk more. It was strange going in to the YMCA today for the last time. I took in a box of Timbits and a Thank-you note for

the staff to show them my appreciation for all their help. It is going to be weird not seeing them and many of the people in the classes anymore. I wouldn't say that I had really become a 'part' of the group or 'gone native', but I was there enough to experience the atmosphere of the place. It's easy to see that they have something good going on there. It's not like other 'gyms' that I've been to.

Part E: Transcription

February 27th, 2008

As of yet, I have not begun transcribing my interviews. I have all of the recordings safely stored (and in multiple copies, just in case), but have not had time to actually sit down and type it all up. I felt that I should include an entry about this because I had been planning to do the transcribing as soon as possible after each interview. I have been spending so much time at the YMCA (most of a regular workday) recruiting and interviewing that by the time I get home I only have time to feed myself (and take care of other academic and personal responsibilities), type up my reflexive journal for the day, and then get to bed at a reasonable hour so that I can do it all again the next day. I hope to begin transcribing this coming week however, as I think I now have the right ratio of initiates to reflective maintainers scheduled for interviews and thus I will not have to be at the YMCA as much.

March 4th, 2008

I started transcribing the first interview today and the process seems to have come back fairly easily- like riding a bike. From having to do an interview assignment in 5P17, I was able to work out a lot of the bugs with my equipment. Before, I had just been listening to it off my recorder (which is pretty small) and often times my finger would slip and hit the wrong button (fast forward and rewind are on the same toggle key), causing me to lose my place and need to find it again. To avoid this problem, I have burned the interviews onto CDs and have placed my CD player on my desk. There are separate buttons for fast forwarding, rewinding, and playing/pausing, so the chances of me accidentally losing my place are lessened. It also has a remote control, so I can keep it close to my keyboard for efficiency. The sound quality is much better too, so I won't have to go back as much trying to figure out what they said. I tried this out today and it seems to be working really well (a huge relief! I remember being overcome with frustration for the 30 minute interview I had to transcribe for class. I couldn't imagine having to go through that for 11 interviews that are on average 60 minutes long). My pace was pretty good, starting off at about nine and a half recorded minutes transcribed per hour of typing. If I keep that up it should only take me about 5 hours to finish transcribing Laura's interview (49 minutes and 16 seconds).

March 10th, 2008

Today's transcribing went well. My hands and back get a bit sore from the repetitive nature of the activity though, so I have scheduled in breaks after every 2 hours for tomorrow. It was interesting to picture the interview in my mind as the track played

through. We sure did laugh a lot. One thing that would be helpful for the future would be to cut the track into 10 minute segments, that way when I come back from breaks it will be easier to find my spot.

March 11th, 2008

There isn't really anything terribly interesting to write about today. I finished transcribing the first interview and have made my way through the first 10 recorded minutes of the second one.

March 14th, 2008

Today I finished transcribing the second interview. It took a bit longer than I had hoped, because some unexpected personal-life obstacles came up, but I got it done in the end and it feels good. 9 more to go, and then on to formal data analysis!

March 18th, 2008

Transcription is coming along, but unfortunately not as fast as I want it to. I don't think I'm going to be able to get everything done in time to meet the deadline for the fee reduction form to be submitted. One thing that I wasn't sure about what to write today when I was transcribing, was how to spell the opposite of 'mhmhm' (a sound effect that can be used to state that you're agreeing with someone, or are following what they say). If I write 'uh uh', it seems too similar to 'uh huh', which means the same as 'mhmhm'. I decided in the end, to just write 'no', because that was what the participant was meaning by 'uh uh'. I've also started jotting down themes that I see emerging from multiple interviews.

It is interesting to reflect on the interview process post hoc, because it has allowed me to reflect on how the process was similar or different from interview to interview. For starters, while I was transcribing Rae's (I've decided not to go in order, but to do the ones that I think I will be using first) I realized that by using the chart and asking them to reflect on and clarify their answers, they often changed them... this probably wouldn't happen as frequently with a questionnaire, because once the question was finished, they would probably just move on. There would be no one there to prompt them to reflect on it, unless the follow up questions asked them to do so... but even still, those questions would have to be pre-planned, apply generally to everybody, and might not offer specific cues that were able to be developed through the interview process; something for me to think about.

I think there was some confusion with regards to the concepts behind the three needs, but I think this is because I was trying to address them without explaining exactly what they are. I would be interested to, perhaps in a future study, do interviews where needs theory is actually *taught* to the participants and to see how that relates to their thoughts and experiences. Perhaps teaching the idea of needs theory to participants is an intervention in and of itself... maybe they will make a conscious effort to fulfill these three things now that they have been introduced to them in a formal setting where they are asked to reflect upon them. I have been wondering that about my own participants. I

wonder if they will take the information I introduced to them (albeit it through question form, not factual statement) and use it to try and improve their psychological well-being? Raising consciousness/awareness to something can be very empowering, if someone hasn't really sat down to think about it before.

March 20th, 2008

I have finished Rae's transcript and done a proof-read with the audio file playing. I also realized that it would probably be beneficial for me to number each line so that when it comes time to analyze the data, I can make easy reference to any transcript I want to.

April 3rd, 2008

Australia's and Brandy's transcripts are now complete. Australia's took ages because she spoke very fast and had a lot to say (Which is great! It just took a lot longer than I thought it would). I had a thought as I was typing up Brandy's transcript though... exercise is a very voluntary kind of thing to do. Sure people may feel controlled in doing it (if a doctor or loved one has seriously pressured them into doing it), but it's not like a child going to school who has no other option... a child *has* to go to school or be home schooled, by law. I wonder if anything has been written that reflects on those differences...

Part F: Analysis

April 23rd, 2008

In the spirit of hermeneutical research I am attempting to understand the individual participants' experiences first so that I may be able to construct a 'whole picture'. As such, I am first analyzing each interview holistically and then I will begin the categorical analysis as I look for similarities and differences between each of the cases. I have almost completed the first interview [Laura], or perhaps I should call them 'vignettes'... I don't know. I am enjoying the process though. After having heard the interviews so many times (the actual interview, the transcription process, and now analysis), I feel like I am really getting to know these ladies. I can still play back images from the interviews in my head as I read and/or listen along.

April 25th, 2008

After completing Laura's preliminary analysis and beginning Australia's, I've developed a better approach to the analysis (at least I think it's better). When analyzing Laura's interview I had basically been trying to summarize the information she gave me and supplementing the summaries with direct quotes for thick description. It occurred to me when starting Australia's analysis that I should really be trying to interpret it at the same time, especially with regards to how the information ties into SDT. For example, instead of just describing *why* she exercises, I have begun translating those reasons in SDT terms (i.e. matching them to the types of regulation they represent). I have also been

keeping track of the basic info in an excel document for easy cross referencing. Though it is a very 'quantoid' thing to do, I think it will be helpful when I'm trying to pull the pieces together.

April 30, 2008

Over the last few days I have been feeling very frustrated, but I guess that comes with the territory. My memory stick keeps deleting my analyses, which has forced me to rewrite several pages worth of work. I have learned my lesson though, and am only using my memory stick to save it when I have finished with it for the day. I think the problem might be that the stick was just getting too hot from being in use all day. I haven't had any problems since changing my approach (knock on wood).

I have finished Australia's preliminary analysis and am very much relieved. I purposefully chose to do her towards the beginning because hers was the longest and most interview of them all. So I knew once I got over that obstacle, the rest would seem so much easier and then I wouldn't have to feel so stressed. I think this was a good decision because I'm already feeling more relaxed. I am not going to be able to complete my first draft by the deadline I had set, which annoys me. I hate not achieving my goals. Though I knew it would be a lot of working, I didn't really understand exactly how things would go and how I wanted to approach actually *doing* the analyses until I started doing them. It's easy to say "I'm going to do this, this, and this", but when it comes to actually *doing* it, there's so much more organization and tactic to think about. Things are coming together, so hopefully this will speed the process up. My idea now is that I will do each preliminary analysis reflecting on the ones prior to them, because the point of hermeneutical research is to understand the parts with the whole and vice versa. I figure there is no value in trying to analyze each one completely separate from the group.

June 10, 2008

The month of May was not very productive for me. I completed the individual initiate analyses and their sub-group analysis, and got a start into the reflective maintainers' individual analyses. Due to unusual personal circumstances, however, I made the decision (albeit begrudgingly) to abandon my thesis work for approximately two weeks. I also attended a conference at the beginning of the month which, though it occupied several days, introduced me to some new research that I plan to include in my discussion and as such, it was a very useful experience.

After reading and analyzing most of the interviews now, I have noticed that many of the participants were confused when asked to think about how *society* values the three needs. Even after several attempts at clarifying, many thought I was asking about need satisfaction (their level of competence, etc.) as opposed to how much they value the individual needs. Perhaps having asked both may have reduced the confusion (i.e., first asking about how competent they feel and then asking them how important feeling competent is to them in comparison to the other three needs) or having a cue card that says 'importance' on it to leave above. Or it could be that they didn't change their answers after the clarification because they felt that because they were 'high' in a given need's satisfaction, that that makes it more important to them than the others. It would be

interesting to compare the needs values to a need satisfaction questionnaire to see how the two are related. As a person who is studying various facets of society and psychology, it made sense to me, but I don't know how often these women have ever been prompted to think from 'the eyes of society', which may have led to some of the confusion.

Example of rewords/probes; "let's say the *message* that society wants to send to our children... do you think that it would be that meaningful connections to others are the most important?" (From Mike's interview)

June 11, 2008

It can be challenging at times to write 'academically' when you're constantly reading transcriptions of casually spoken, because you're constantly having to change your hat from thinking like an 'interviewer' to thinking like an 'academic analyst'.

June 13, 2008

In reflecting on how I conducted the interviews, I think it would have been more beneficial for me to have analyzed the three initiates before interviewing the three reflective maintainers, as there are many questions that I would have liked to ask them based on the analysis of the initiate data. I did attempt to analyze as I went, as far interview to interview goes (for example, that is how the theme of long term absence really came to light), but I think I could have done a much more effective job had I been able to pull the pieces from all initiate interviews together before going into the reflective maintainers. Due to the way the recruitment process unfolded and my desperation in trying to find "true" initiates, and meet graduate school deadlines, the RMs and INs were interviewed at random and in as short a time frame as possible, which did not leave room for strategic interview scheduling, nor transcription and analysis between groups. In retrospect, I could have taken the names and numbers of the RM's and told them I would contact them at the end of the month to set up the interview time, which would have given me enough time to find all my INs, transcribe their interviews and make some crude analyses.

June 14, 2008

In writing up the whole-sample analysis and discussion and seeing the number of pages the document is adding up to be, I have come to realize just how large of a project this was. Though I'm sure larger projects have been done, it feels like I have done enough analyzing for three studies instead of one.

June 15, 2008

I almost had a heart attack today. After spending 12+ hours every day for the last 5 days working on this project, I managed to overwrite *both* the original and backup copies of my thesis document with an earlier version located in a completely different

folder that I didn't realize I had opened instead of one of the others. Luckily, after conversing with some tech-savvy friends and my parents' computer guy, I was directed towards a program that recovers lost (and even overwritten!) files. Ironically, it was apparently designed by someone who had overwritten their thesis work. It wasn't cheap, but it was worth every penny! Now, as I wait for the program to work its magic, I am finishing up the final touches on what I can (namely, my reflexive journal and other appendices). In reflecting on the whole process, in the words of my favourite author, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" (Charles Dickens, 1859)... less often the former than the latter, but I'm still glad I did it.

Part G: Critical Friend Q&A

Document Reference (Version 3)	Phil's Question	Meghan's Response
Q1 Line 1389	How do we know it's 'dominating'? 100% consensus across interviews?	Kind of... when looking at how the different motives emerged from the data, Identified regulation emerged as a primary motive for all three initiates. Introjected, Intrinsic, and External motives also emerged, but at more of a secondary and/or tertiary level of importance. This was determined based not only on the prevalence of the motives, but also in how passionately they spoke about them and how much detail, emphasis, and attention was volitionally given to discussing them.
Q2 Lines 1394-1396	What in this statement do you see suggesting value or importance in the text?	I chose this statement to provide a descriptive example of how exercise is viewed as a 'solution to an important problem. For Laura, she is motivated mainly by the prospect of achieving gains in flexibility. This is important to her because she wants to improve her mobility so that she can maintain her functional independence. This is important to the text because the nature of the research is to provide an in-depth and descriptive account of the findings. Quotations are one of the best ways to do this.
Q3 Lines 1437-1443	Why do you feel this is of value and not a source of external control exemplified in controlling	This is of value because it exemplifies Brandy's 'important problem'. For Brandy, staying away

	motivation?	from medication is of high importance to her and thus she places value in the achievement of this behavioural goal (closely aligned with identified regulation). For her this isn't a 'reward' or the 'avoidance of punishment', it is just personally important to her as a person.
Q4 Lines 1437-1457	Could this not also be interpreted as 'valuing' looking good, which is non self-determined in nature?	I see your point. The reason I had classified 'looking good' as 'external' was because of the work by Frederick and Ryan (1993) which says that appearance motives are extrinsic. Any thoughts? Personally, I think that if they are wanting to look good so other people will find them aesthetically pleasing, it would be external, but if they want to look good because it is personally important to them, as a person, to find <i>themselves</i> aesthetically pleasing, that may be more identified... what do you think?
Q5 Lines 1534-1537	Is this really autonomy support or more closely aligned with the concept of involvement per se? It sounds like involvement to me?	I see what you mean. The reason I included this quote was because it demonstrated how her doctor was <i>not</i> prescribing exercise to her and was <i>not</i> trying to place pressure or guilt on her. What you don't see in this quote is how her doctor is supportive of her decision to exercise, but doesn't try to extrinsically motive her (it is more explicit in the other two quotes)
Q6 Lines 1600-1605	How does this quote link with the theme other than demonstrating or answering for the first class/exercise session?	It doesn't. It was only intended for that purpose (to show Laura's initial struggle and how she remedied the situation for her next class so that she would have a better experience).
Q7 Lines 1632-1645	Could this be more akin to competence whereby the initiate's don't stand out and therefore feel more effective in their new exercise setting?	I agree and disagree. I would agree with the addition that maybe they have a greater sense of competence <i>because</i> their sense of relatedness and belonging in the group supports their ability to 'blend in', but... they also

		reported feeling less competent in the very early stages of initiation, despite being in the same social environment. For example, Laura (after three weeks) felt her competence was 'medium' and Australia doubted her abilities during her first few sessions (see lines 2056-2057) because of how difficult it was to do the exercises and try to keep up with the others.
Q8 Lines 1723-1727	Do you have any evidence of illness other than 2 flu/cold initiates –would this theme be better called 'Health-Related Impediments'?	Evidence other than the flu/cold initiates themselves include their observations of <i>others</i> experiencing sickness and need for surgery (for instance, in the quote that this question was directed to). I'm fine with changing the title to Health-Related Impediments, I just liked the alliteration of Illness and Injury ☺
Q9 Lines 1756-1758	What in this quote suggests less exclamation on Brandy's behalf?	The way she said this whole statement left me with the feeling that she doesn't feel <i>as</i> in charge of her behaviours and decisions as Laura does. Also, she focuses on her choices revolving around what 'has to be done', as opposed to what she 'wants' to do and that her husband is part of that decision making process.
Q10 Lines 1931-1932	Is this the only mental well-being quote offered? If so –is this really a category given the depth of evidence in other categories?	1) This actually touches on something I left you in a note in my most recent draft (which you haven't seen yet). The sections on 'mental well-being', 'Psychological Need Thwarting' and 'Perceived Important of Psychological Needs' are a bit different than the rest because they aren't really 'themes' per se... they aren't organized by how they 'emerged', but rather by how they were organized/asked in the interview. So I guess I should make some kind of separation of them from the themes, but I'm not really sure

		<p>what is the best way to do that.</p> <p>2) I have included some more quotes in this section in the updated draft. Let me know if they should be kept in or removed.</p>
Q11 Lines 1947-1950	How does this content comply with the theme of need thwarting beyond the fact that this response was given to questions probing the thwarting of particular needs? Please clarify in the proceeding text.	*see response 1) to Q10
Q12 Lines 1962-1977	How is this an example or illustration of need thwarting?	This is an example of need thwarting, as it relates to how the participants would react when other people try to take more control of the decisions being made in their exercise behaviour, touching on the notion of autonomy. Australia's quote provides an example of how she reacted to a time in her exercise experience when she felt that her autonomy was being thwarted.
Q13 Lines 2056	Does this participant's indication that this need is a major worry convey the sense of importance you are claiming?	It does in the sense that it was of greater importance to her when she first started <i>because</i> she was worried that she might not be able to keep up or be good at it.
Q14 Lines 2078	Did the participant say this? Or your interpretation?	No, the participant did not say that. Anything in brackets is an observation or clarification on my part for the reader. I do think I could word this insert better though... I will change it to "motions with her hands to represent 'being the top of the heap'". I added a paragraph at the beginning of the results section to explain how to read/understand the formatting of the quotes.
Q15 Line 2082	This seems like a vague quote – what does it exemplify in your analysis?	On it's own, yes, it does appear to be very vague. This was Laura's response to why she felt that connectedness was of primary importance to society in general, thus

		what she is saying is that because we are 'all together in the world', it is (in her opinion) of primary importance for us to have a sense of meaningful connection to one another.
Q16 Lines 2182-2187	Do we need this whole quote from Mike or just the part not scratched out?	No, I don't mind taking that part out.
Q17 Lines 2237-2242	What do these circled quotes imply about the link between needs and motives?	That need satisfaction is related to more internalized forms of regulation? With regards to motives the first two circles relate to intrinsic and identified regulation, but the reason I included this quote was because of the third circle which reflects a sense of belonging/meaningful connection (relatedness)
Q18 Lines 2324-2326	Is this exemplifying relatedness?	It's exemplifying how Cafeteria Club members come to the YMCA even if they are unable to exercise that day, which could symbolize their sense of connectedness and relatedness.
Q19 Lines 2341-2346	Does this add anything to the theme's interpretation that Rae's quotes do not already cover?	Yes, it shows that Rae is not the only one who has developed connections that were founded as a function of joining the YMCA and now transcend the exercise setting. Rae has already done so, Mike is contemplating it. The initiates are not concerned with it.
Q20 Lines 2389-2341	Not seeing how this adds to Mike's thick description of this experience... if not unique do we need it?	It wasn't intended to add to Mike's description. It's there to show the reader that the appearance of trial members are not uncommon in their experience. Along with Brandy's account (which is scratched out) that makes 3/6 participants who brought up trial memberships and so I thought it would be important to illustrate that.
Q21 Lines 2486-2494	Do these quotes make the same point?	Yes they do... that was the idea ☺
Q22	Why bolded? What significance	It tells you how she said it. She

Lines 2804-2806	does this change in text have for me as a reader?	emphasized that there was one – meaning ‘ <u>only one</u> ’ versus ‘at least one’ or ‘one, I think’.
Q23 Line 2843	Does this quote signify much compared to A and B?	No, it just show an example from Simba so that there is one from each RM
Q24 Lines 2912-2927	What does the absence of data pertaining to thwarting imply about the tenability of a threshold?	I wouldn’t say that there is an ‘absence’ of data... if you look at their ‘need satisfaction’ (which we didn’t really ‘measure’ per se), they all appear to have fairly high need satisfaction in life in general. If thinking about a cross-contextual threshold I think this data implies that because their global need satisfaction appears to be high, their needs can withstand acute bouts of thwarting without it negatively impacting their psychological well-being (or in other words, the ‘threshold’ is crossed in the global domain and that supports their well-being in the exercise context when their needs are being thwarted).
Q25 Line 2975	Does this add anything unique?	No. Does it have to? I just had it there so that all three voices were being heard.
Q26 Lines 2987-2996	What does your interpretation of these quotes suggest regarding the quality of question posed to the N? Anything? Could a reader infer that the ambiguous nature of the questions may be pervasive through the interview guide? Extreme though this is –it’s something to keep in mind.	As documented in my reflexive journal, I have acknowledged that there were problems with participant interpretations of the questions, sometimes even when reworded.
Q27 Lines 3090-3091	What does this section add that’s unique above and beyond the analysis of the IN and RM group previously reported?	This section, in my mind, pulls all the pieces together to understand the group as a whole (part of hermeneutic research)... I agree with your suggestion that this step could be covered through the discussion and will make the appropriate changes.

Appendix G – Individual Holistic Analyses

1: Initiate Group: Laura

Background

Laura is a 77 year old initiate exerciser with a BMI of 31. She expends 3790 kcal of energy each week on physical activity, with the majority of her energy expenditure occurring through mild physical activity while doing volunteer work. She has been following her formal exercise regimen for 3 weeks, engaging in activities such as walking and Aqua Fit classes. When she has the chance, before or after her aqua class, she also likes to swim lengths and wade in the pool.

Why

She began exercising after her doctor suggested that she try an aqua fitness class to try and help treat her arthritis complaints, but she emphasizes that he *suggested* it -her *reasons* for starting an exercise program are more personal in nature; she wanted to feel better, keep healthy, reduce stress and improve her flexibility. For Laura, the ideas of improving flexibility and reducing stress were the most important reasons for her to become more active at this stage in her life.

“Well, it’s uh, the flexibility mainly. That is the biggest thing for me right now at this stage. [To improve] mobility and you know, getting out of cars and off the couch”

“I’ve had no problems with my blood pressure until just lately, so I think uh, stress is building up! (laughs) and then this will help me reduce the stress”

Important People/Family

Other influential people that have helped motivate Laura for exercise are her husband, who is “a hundred percent for it!” [L88], and her newly discovered exercise buddies (people she already knew, but didn’t know came to the YMCA).

“When I came here I found three friends, so I have friends when I come here, so it’s okay (giggles). That helps me comin’ ”.

The most influential people in her life in general are her husband, her children and her church. She considers them all to be important because she respects them.

“Well... the younger people, they have a different insight into something that I have... never experienced in our younger years, so it’s an eye opener and I’ve learned from them and uh... well, my husband and I have been married 57 years, so that’s a **long** time! (laughs)”

Exercise/General Info

After being raised on a farm, marrying young, and starting a family, she went to work on friends' farms cutting and tying grapes. When her children were older she went to work as a cleaner for contractors building new houses and for 30 years she has been very active in the community doing volunteer work in the operation of a charity thrift shop, as well as tying quilts for third world countries. With having had a busy schedule for so many years, she feels that it's "time to have more time for [her]self" and that exercising at the YMCA is one way that she can do that.

"I had a very busy week last week, but I squeezed it in... and I made an effort to come here and I was glad I did... it was *very* cold outside... but it *was* alright".

At this point in her exercise adoption, however, she doesn't plan to engage in formal exercise over the summer months, "because it's too hot!"

"I've got gardening and, and other exercise and things to do. I don't want to be tied down to uh, anything. There's gardening... and I do *a lot* of canning and cooking. Seems that's where I spend most of my time and then give it to the kids"

Unless she is rushed, Laura likes to put in the extra time and effort to swim 5-10 lengths of the pool after her Aqua Fit class is finished. When she has to leave class early she tries to make it in early to squeeze in some extra activity.

"Like the last time I came earlier and left earlier, so uh... I didn't do the lengths, but I was hopping and... and I felt that was real good for my *feet* –the flexibility of my feet, the arches, and the toes... 'cause they get stiff too, and sore, mhm... and I feel like *that* was really good for it."

The physical environment at the YMCA also plays an important role in Laura's motivation for exercise because she finds the surroundings stimulating.

"I like the idea of the beautiful surroundings, I really like it. It's a *very* interesting building and that... **that** can motivate you too –getting' to something different than just seeing your own home or where you do your, your um, volunteer work. It just makes you feel good, you know uh, coming to such a beautiful place. I think it's worth it. 'Cause you can get into a rut after a while, you know... and this gets you out and, uh, like I say, it's nice and modern. You see all kinds of people"

Need Salience

In Life in General

Competence

With respect to her life in general, there are several areas in life where Laura feels confident in her abilities, such as driving the car, cooking, but predominantly with her volunteer work. There she has a lot of experience and some authority.

“Well, I guess I’ve been there a long time. I know the ins and outs and... and there’s other people that don’t know as much, and... um... they’re newer. They’re just coming in, so I’m training some. And uh, so I feel confident in that part. Mhmmm.”

She is particularly passionate about her work tying quilts for third world families.

“I just get through it so *fast*. And yah, uh-uh, I stitch and they tie [says with enthusiasm]... so I could have one and a half people tying, but a lot of times just *one* girl ties behind me, but then I have to help her so she can keep up with me. So I’m confident there and... (laughs)”.

Autonomy

Laura perceives herself as a very autonomous person, in that she feels as though *she* is in charge of her own decisions and behaviours in everyday life.

“Well, I’m *always* in charge (laughs)... it feels like I’m always in charge.”

She recognizes, however, that certain aspects of living within a society are often determined by a government and that sometimes she may not be the best person to make certain decisions, depending on the context. For example, despite not always liking all the decisions politicians make, handing over control to others in this context does not cause her any psychological discomfort.

“Oh, listen! I don’t mind, uh, giving uh, the authority over to someone else and let them take over and um, I don’t mind if they make *some* decisions... actually, I’m not always such a good decision *maker* (laughs). I find it hard to do. I believe in the ... I guess I’ve structured my life to fit into the laws of the land and I don’t even *think* of breakin’ ‘em and um, so... I just go ahead and do whatever –nothing gives me stress, ‘cause it just comes naturally”.

Relatedness

Laura’s meaningful connections to others have been made mainly through her family, church, and charity work. She did not feel very connected to her co-workers at the contractor job, because was “mainly with *men*, never with women”, though she felt the head contractor himself was “really good to [her]”. Conversely, she has felt very meaningfully connected to the people she works with as a volunteer and considers them to be like family-like.

“Well, with my family members it’s a little different... than with people that you work with... but uh, they can be just as close to me as uh, as a family”

In Exercise

Competence

In relation to physical activity, Laura perceives herself as being moderately confident in her ability to exercise. She associates this with two things: the weather, and being an initiate. As a new exerciser, she feels that she still has a lot to learn before she can be good at it and feel 100% confident. Because of her arthritis, air pressure plays a role in how stiff her joints feel. When they are stiff, she feels less confident in her ability to complete physical activities.

“Right now I’m learning all the, all the –motions! And you have to do the left and the right leg and just the other way around you get a little mixed up. So I’m still learning that! (laughs)”

“The weather has a lot to do with it. If I’m out walking... and I walk very slow, and by the time I go back I can walk a little faster (laughs) and I blame it on the weather, that makes me... I’m sort of like a thermometer: I get **stiff** and then I get *loose*, and then I get **stiff**! (laughs) And uh, so it all depends on how flexible I am”

Autonomy

Laura perceives herself as being highly autonomous in her exercise behaviour, in that she feels as though *she* is the one who is in charge of making the decision to go the YMCA. Though it was her doctor that suggested she participate in aqua fitness classes, she does not feel as though she is pressured by him to do so and does not feel obligated to heed his advice if she doesn’t want to.

“No, I’m in charge of [my exercise] (laughs). ‘Cause I don’t have to go if I didn’t want to (laughs)”

Similarly, when participating in Aqua Fit, Laura doesn’t mind handing control of the class content over to the instructor because, as a new exerciser, she wants their guidance. She doesn’t feel obligated to do everything the instructor is asking if she does not feel the demands are reasonable, and she recognizes that there is less pressure based on the fact that no one is being formally evaluated on their exercise performance.

“It gives us ideas. You gotta get ideas from *other* people. Um, you’re not always right (laughs). [The instructor] has to give me the –show me the ins and outs. I just follow the instructor and... as long as she doesn’t *make me* do 40 lengths or something (laughs) uh, no, the instructor’s very good. Either you *do* it or you *don’t* do it. You see, you don’t get marked on it and it’s all up to you. Whatever you do, it’s up to you.”

Relatedness

As a new exerciser at the YMCA, Laura has made a few exercise buddies. One in particular, whom she regards as a role model and source of motivation, also attends the quilting group and married into her family.

“Yes, there is one girl here that swims 40 lengths and actually, she married my cousin and this is where – I didn’t know I would meet her here, but I did! I guess I’m connected to her... as far as exercise. It’s more than [lineage]... and we also do the quilting. It’s a good feeling when you have somebody who knows you from way back and... and you have things in common that you like. I like to do things.”

Need Values/Importance

Initially, when thinking about herself as a person, Laura placed her needs in this order of importance: 1: Competence; 2: Relatedness; 3: Autonomy. She placed competence first because “It’s very important that you’re confident in your abilities. If you’re not confident in yourself, what can you do? ... you know, you’re meaningless”. She placed relatedness in second because she feels it is important to be able to do things with people that “you have things in common” with. At first, Laura was not sure about where to place Autonomy and so she placed it in third. She felt that she *was* in charge of her decisions and behaviours, but was not entirely comfortable with the social stigma associated with taking ‘control’. After discussing what it means to be in charge of one’s own decisions and behaviours, she moved autonomy into a tied position with relatedness.

“I don’t know what to do with that one! (laughs) It looks **bad**. Well, when it’s in words (laughs). See, when you’re working with other people you have to do it together... but yes, I guess I am.”

When thinking about the values of society at large, Laura felt that the order of importance would be different than her own and placed them all equally in first place, because “we’re all together in the world!” Though she recognizes that she is not in control of the world, she is content with how in charge she is of her own life and decisions.

“I’m –have enough control of my life. I think I have a hundred percent, I think. (laughs) ... maybe 90%”

In thinking of herself as an exerciser, Laura also initially placed the three needs equally in first, but when asked to qualify her choice it became obvious that she had been confused about the question. After a better explanation of the question she placed the needs in this order: 1: Relatedness, 2: Autonomy, 3: Confidence, explaining that relatedness was most important to her as an exerciser because in a class, they’re all in the same boat and that helps her to achieve her goals: “there’s a group... it’s a group therapy thing... and you do it together” [L: 587]. When asked why the other two needs were less important to her as an exerciser she changed the order again so that they were all equal again.

Connecting the Three Needs

Laura feels as though there are a few different connections between all three of the needs, in that having a sense that you are in charge of your decisions helps to support you in finding meaningful connections. “if you have meaningful connections... that can give you more confidence in your abilities... and uh, that makes... your control of your decisions

and behaviours”. In relation to motivation in general, she believes that she is more likely to want to do something if she feels in charge of her decision to do it and if she has a meaningful connection to someone who is also doing it, “puts a face on it, I guess (chuckles)”. She also feels that confidence in your abilities is a key ingredient for motivation, but that you don’t necessarily have to be confident in order to try something new.

“Yes, [confidence] helps... if you’re not confident, you –there’s ... nothing to motivate you”

“Well, I’m not good in *everything*, but I give it a try. I’ll *try* anything, and uh (laughs)... and if they don’t like it, that’s too bad! (laughs). It’s the best I can do. That’s how I look at it.”

Well-Being and Exercise

In general, Laura describes her mental well-being as being “Not bad. Sometimes it could be improved”. For example, she feels that improved confidence in her ability to communicate effectively would improve her mental well-being.

“Yah... I wish I could better communication... yah, I don’t have it. I could improve on that”.

This was further evidenced when answering what she perceives as tough questions. Aside from perhaps not understanding the question, it is possible that her preference to avoid this type of situation may be partially due to a lack of confidence in her ability to communicate her answers.

“These are hard questions! I’m not one for answering questions. When it comes for that, I always avoid them! (laughs)”

While exercising, however, Laura feels her mental well-being is “real good” because “there’s no other challenges than what’s in front of you”, it helps to clear her mind. After exercising she says she feels lighter in both body and spirit.

“I think it works on your spirit too. Like, after walking or cycling... uh, it’s always good”

Need Thwarting

According to Laura, if she was having a good day mentally it wouldn’t bother her if her exercise performance wasn’t as good as usual, because she is not being evaluated by another person. Furthermore, she wouldn’t mind if the exercise leader took more control of the class than usual.

“No, it doesn’t matter. Because there’s nobody to mark you (smiles and laughs). You do what you like! (laughs) It’s a free world; we have a choice. That wouldn’t hurt – bother me at all. No, I’d just brush it off my shoulder because it’s uh... you’re having a good day and a good time... and it’s not that serious (smiles)”

She did mention however, that if nothing seemed to be going right on a day that had been good, she would probably start to feel discouraged.

“I don’t know whether it would be [okay]... if you’re mentally good and y-y-you’re not experiencing anything good, I think... you’re discouraged”

With respect to the people she feels meaningfully connected to through exercise, she feels it is a nice surprise when her cousin-in-law does show up, but she has actually only seen her there *once*, and so is not expecting her to be there and thus would still be happy and enjoy herself if she did not attend.

“Oh, it makes no difference. Last time I didn’t see her –I only seen her once! (laughs)”

Before coming in to her last Aqua Fit class, Laura said she felt confident, relatively in charge, and very connected to others. During and after her exercise class she felt her confidence had skyrocketed.

“Well, I figure I could do *anything* after! (laughs) Yah! (laughs)... well, you’re all refreshed and relaxed and... and um, you’re ready to... take on the world (chuckles).”

Furthermore, in comparing her experience from the last class to her first class, she had felt much more confident in her ability to complete the exercises. As an initiate, she was unfamiliar with how the class operated and the additional challenge of exercising in a pool for the first time made the experience a bit intimidating for her. She stayed afterwards, however, to swim a few laps and that helped her to establish some competence.

“[It was] much different ‘cause I was in the deep water the first time... I didn’t know where to go, all the rows were finished, and so I stayed back and it got too deep (chuckles). That’s when I did all my swimming after and that –that sort of straightened it up”

During and after her class Laura felt unchanged in her perceived autonomy and a little less meaningfully connected to others. Consistent with previous statements on relatedness and exercise, she didn’t feel as though the lack of meaningful connections inhibited her mental well-being while exercising.

“Well, last time when I came I didn’t know anybody ... but the fir- the other time, that’s when I met three people I knew! (chuckles) but I still felt good and ... so I wasn’t really –you know, we were there, exercising and ... smiling and you know ... and ... it was fine ... yah.”

2: Initiate Group: Brandy

Participant Characteristics

Brandy is a functionally independent 77 year old initiate exerciser with a BMI of 25.2. She typically expends 2730 kcal of energy each week on physical activity, with the majority of her energy expenditure occurring through vigorous physical activity during her leisure time. She has been following her formal exercise regimen for 4 weeks, though she had initially started in the spring of 2007. After attending the YMCA for 4 months, her husband required knee surgery and she had to quit her program to take care of him. After taking 7 months off, she is now engaging in activities such as Aqua Fit, cycling, walking, resistance training, and stretching exercises. Because Brandy has not accumulated 6 months of regular exercise in the past year, let alone 6 months in a row, she is classified as an initiate. At the time of the interview, Brandy was a bit under the weather with a head cold.

Why

Brandy exercises for a variety of physical and psychological reasons. She feels that it is a means toward reducing stress and achieving physical health gains such as improved flexibility and bone density, as well as reduced blood pressure. While the desire to receive these benefits reflects external regulation, it is important to Brandy to avoid taking medication for her bones. Since she feels that exercise is one potential solution to this problem, this demonstrates an element of identified regulation as well. Also, she says it “makes [her] feel good”, which suggests shades of intrinsic regulation. Psychologically, she feels exercise helps to calm her nerves and helps her feel more alert and attentive. While Brandy says that the most important reason for her to exercise is stress reduction, the importance of avoiding the use of medication is far more prevalent throughout the interview. Given her determination to prevent needing prescription drugs and that the reasoning behind stress reduction is to lower her blood pressure, it is likely that Brandy wants to reduce stress so that she will not have to take blood pressure pills.

“It uh, de-stresses me and it uh makes me more flexible. I have arthritis in the uh –osteoarthritis in the lower back, so *that* really helps me, especially the aquatics.

I try to keep the blood pressure... under control, ‘cause if I get *nervous* about things it goes up.

I uh, I feel more *alert* –you know, *not* as *forgetful*... (laughs) goes with the territory sometimes.

I don’t want to take medication... so, I’m *trying*... to see if that’s going to work. (giggles) And... the *test* will be when I have my ... bone density, but I won’t have that until June, but uh... with the *bones*... and that’s another thing –walking is supposed to help that too. So –yah, so... uh, he’s gonna do a bone density in June and I was... I didn’t have osteoporosis or... I’m not quite osteopenia. So that’s

what I'm fighting for, 'cause I *don't* want to take the medication. So... we'll see whether that works or not. That's my... my motivation.

It makes me feel good (says with a smile)"

Because Brandy believes in preventive medicine, she was agreeable to start exercising as an older adult when her daughter (a successful regular exerciser) presented her with a trial membership to the YMCA to get her started.

"Well, actually, my *daughter* got me started, 'cause she uh... reg –exercises regularly and she thought it would be good for me and it is! (chuckles) She's very –oh, she used to be a figure skater and now she's- she uh, skated for a long time so she has to be physically active. She's 44 now, but she still... likes to... exercise. I think, um... prevention is the best *cure*... and so, I want to try whatever I can to keep healthy"

Brandy looks forward to exercising with her daughter when she comes home from Toronto and feels that exercising has influenced her relationship with her daughter in that they help motivate each other, though she does not need her daughter to push her per se.

"Well, I don't know... just um, makes us *motivate* each other, probably ... although, I probably need more motivating than *she* does (laughs). Well... because I'm *older* and it's easy to say "I don't feel like going today" So... I'm *not* doing that yet, but (laughs). Yeah, um... she doesn't *have* to [push me]. I'm ready to *go*, but she lives in Toronto and she comes to the Y when she comes home and we go together."

The Initiate Experience

Brandy feels that her experience as an initiate exerciser has been a positive one thus far and looks forward to seeing her progress through the YMCA's FitLinxx computer program. This is a system that all members are able to access at kiosks throughout the building and allows them to record their exercise prior to or after their workouts and receive motivational notes from the fitness instructors when they log in. It provides them with a report on their progress which is emailed to them once a month.

"Well, it's positive. I just ... just like the *feeling* when I'm finished. I love getting my... letter from the FitLinxx to tell me how many elephants I've lifted (laughs). They send you a –a *list* of ... what *parts* you exercised –you know, and ... how much time you spent on it, how much weight you lifted during the month and every month they send you uh... the *email* ... so I look forward to that! (chuckles) They say, "You lifted *so-many* elephants" or "*So-many* pounds" and an elephant weighs *so-much* weight and so uh... so, it just gives me a total breakdown on what I've done ... for the *month* and what... you know, what *level* I'm at. So... and they give you little encouraging notes too that uh –you know, when you key in, and it'll tell you "Oh wow! You're really doing good!"... you know, "You're sticking with it and that's really good"... so, *that* makes you feel good too.

Usually, or I uh... if I do aquatics and the bike, I usually don't have time to do it before, so I record it after"

The benefits she has experienced thus far have been both physical and psychological, with improvements in her back condition and having more energy and ambition. Like Australia, she notes that when she takes time off, the exercise is more difficult to do when she returns, but she is grateful that her body is still functioning and that she is able to get out to do things.

"Well, it's been positive. I feel physically better. My back doesn't bother me *as much*. If I *miss* for three or four days –doesn't happen very often- but, I notice the stiffness coming back, so... that helps... *a lot!* (giggles) And psychologically, it makes me feel like doing *more* when I go home. I don't feel I'm *exhausted*, I feel like I wanna *do* things. So, I feel *stronger*.

It's just uh... you are so *thankful* that you can do it when you see people that *can't* get around and aren't able to get out there and do it like... I just feel thankful every day that everything's still working! (laughs)"

Though a positive experience, Brandy has experienced a number of challenges in returning to exercise. Though she was active with more household duties than usual (because she had to take over the jobs that her husband normally did) during the 7 months she took off and did not feel really weak when she started back, she has still had to build herself back up to the level she was at when she left.

"I was raking leaves and doing all kinds of things at home –you know or using the leaf uh, vacuum and that, which was quite heavy and I thought –I think the only reason I could do *that* is because I'd *done* these exercises and felt stronger, 'cause it gets pretty heavy, and my husband had knee surgery, so it was *my* job... (laughs) and we have ten trees on our property, so... *lots* of leaves. So, I felt I didn't give up *exercising* -you know, when he had the surgery and we *couldn't* go, 'cause I had to do things that he couldn't do so... I was doing *that* exercise. [When] I tried to start back... well, they had me start –you know, at *lower* weights, so I'm *gradually* –it's almost four weeks, so I'm *gradually* getting back to where I was before, but you –you lose the strength when you give it up for a while."

Being Female

With regards to being a female, Brandy feels as though in older adulthood, women are dismissive of exercise because they need or want that time for other activities. Like Australia, she recognizes the sedentary nature of this type of lifestyle and does not want that for herself, mainly because she wants to avoid having to take prescription medication.

"I think that *women* uh, a lot of them, when they get to this age, they don't *bother* that much –you know? My friends, they always say, "Oh, I don't know... why you do

that or how you can waste the *time*”, like they don’t feel it’s *that* important, but *I* do. They like to read a lot. Or they might knit or crochet. I’m sure I’d like to do that before, but right now ... too many things are *sit down* jobs, you know? (chuckles) So, I feel you have to get up and get moving because... uh, you know –the doctor always feels –*says* “Do you exercise?” and then um, and I’m not on *any* prescription drugs so far, so I’m just hoping it’s going to *help*! And so I –I think that... just is a positive thing for me”

Influential People- In Exercise

In thinking of who motivates her to exercise, Brandy feels strongly that *she* is the most influential person in her exercise behaviour now that she is into the swing of things, but that it was her daughter who got the ball rolling for her. Even now though, she is still more likely to put in more time exercising if her daughter is in town, because she likes to go with her if she is going.

“I do, I guess. You know, I just look forward to –to *going* and I’ve made up my mind that I’m going to do it five times a week... and *sometimes* I’ll go on a Saturday when my daughter’s down, but she usually has to head back on Sunday, but... if she goes early Sunday –before she goes back- then we go Saturday and Sunday and I just do the weights then ... or ... or the bike –or the bike.

Well, I –I think *I* am [the most influential person in my exercise behaviour] *now*, but she got me started. So... that ... probably *now* it’s me because she’s away all week (laughs) and she doesn’t get home every weekend. *How* do I motivate myself? ... Well, it’s just because I know the results feel good to me, so it’s *worth* it.”

Her doctor is also supportive of her decision to exercise. She feels that neither him nor her daughter have ever tried to pressure her into it, but that they do ask her *if* she is being active. She welcomes this questioning, because it shows her that they care.

“The doctor... he really likes the idea that I’m doing this, you know? ...

They *ask* me if I did [my exercise]. I like it that they *care* that I’m doing things.”

Influential People-in General

The most influential people in Brandy’s life in general are her family members; more specifically, her husband, daughter, and son. In terms of motivation for exercise, her husband and daughter are the most influential because her son is not very active anymore. Though her husband can not participate in exercise anymore, because of his health condition, they are still inseparable and he finds other ways to entertain himself while she is working out. For instance, on the day of the interview he met up with some friends at the mall across the road from the YMCA.

“Oh, probably my *husband* and my *daughter*... I have a son, but he doesn’t motivate me (laughs). He’s not into that yet, but he used to be when he was younger. But, so now –but he is *happy* that I’m doing it.

Oh yah, [my husband] would come too, but he’s got a hernia and uh, so –and he had the *knee surgery* and he’s only got 30% in his *other* knee. So, but we always do everything *together* and now he goes for coffee while I come and workout (laughs).”

Time and Effort

Like Australia, Brandy hates to miss a workout and like both Laura and Australia, she always finds space in her schedule to fit it in at another time if she knows she will be missing. Like Laura, when she has a little extra time she likes to squeeze in a little extra exercise. Because her husband comes to pick her up, she prefers to be active while waiting instead of sitting.

“I’ve made up mind that I’m going to do so much and I *do* it... *and* I feel very disappointed if something –like I *may* have to miss Thursday because ... the family wants to do some... work at my brother-in-law’s, so I’ll just have to *change* my schedule this week, you know? But... so, I’ll go on Saturday then... probably. [Friday was] the only time I’ve missed in the ... you know *this* month, or even –I never missed a day when I came for the four months doing the five days.

Sometimes I’ll go 35 minutes on the bike –you know, if I –I go about 2 hours on Tuesday and Thursday ... but if I *have* ... more *time*, then –like, usually my husband drops me off and he’ll go over to the mall and I tell him to pick me up at a certain time then ... I just do extra. So I make it up –sometimes I do the uh ... cross-country trainer ... *ten* minutes **max**! (laughs) That’s *very* hard to do.

She is determined to meet her goals, but at the same time simply enjoys her exercise and so the effort she puts into her workout doesn’t seem that burdensome to her.

“It’s just that I ... I *like* to do it! That’s all. So *effort* –that’s not *hard* for me. I *have* a goal and I try to push *harder*. I want to get stronger, and so ... I just keep increasing weights on things I feel I can do... until I get to where I want to be until it gets *too* hard (chuckles). Then I sort of *plateau* –you know, and stay there for a while until I feel I could handle more.”

Weather & Intentions

Like Laura and Australia, Brandy feels that it can be dangerous to walk outdoors in the winter. Because she has learned that walking is good exercise to protect against bone disease, she has decided to walk at the indoor track at the YMCA.

“That’s why I’m doing the indoor track when I finish, ‘cause I thought I should try to do *some* walking. It’s *safer* in there (laughs) than icy streets. Yah.”

Need Salience

In Life in General Competence

In life in general, Brandy feels confident in her ability to manage household duties, like Laura and Australia, unless she is short on time. She is also confident in her ability to pursue her hobby of playing the piano, which she likens to exercise because it makes her happy and keeps her mind alert. The areas of her life where she feels most confident are in her daily chores and in exercise.

“Well... I think in *managing* household things... and um, well I have a *hobby* and I really enjoy spending hours at *that* if I can, but I’m afraid that it’s a sit-down hobby! (laughs) I like playing the piano... and *reading* new music... and uh... right now I’m working on Beethoven’s sonatas and... this is something that makes me happy and I think –you know, that’s the same as exercise... and it keeps me *alert* –like people doing puzzles. Well, then I try to learn new music every day. So that’s *my* challenge, there (laughs). Yah, and the –like things around the house and I like doing them, but I don’t like uh... being short of *time*. That makes it... a little bit harder.

Autonomy

While Brandy and her husband do talk things over, she often finds herself doing things because she *has* to do them. In terms of handing over decision making, Brandy is quite happy to do so when she does not feel competent in the task at hand, and sees how it can be a benefit to her when she needs help.

“Well, I’m (laughs) –I just *do* what I *have* to do and that’s it. I –I don’t uh –you know... well, we always talk things over, but I just uh, go ahead and do what *has* to be done Well, I *am* in charge of everything, but I just uh... *some* things around the house I can’t do, you know that ... I’m glad my husband’s still able to do ... electrical things (chuckles) and –I’ve *no* ability there!

Oh yah! I like to get (chuckles) –We always do a... we have a large family, we do *Christmas*, we do our family reunion at our house in the summer and sometimes there’s as many as a hundred people and uh this is other -outside family come too, but *I* like all the help I can get there. So, we set everything up, but it’s *good* to have uh... other people help, but now the younger ones are saying well, okay, *they’re* going to take over the *actual* work so, this year we –they all got red aprons for Christmas and the old -*older* ones were not allowed to lift a finger! (laughs) Oh I liked it! Because we’ve *done* it for –for over 40 years, so it’s nice to see them take over and that we don’t have to give up getting together. ‘Cause I really enjoy

that (chuckles). I can sit back and enjoy it a bit more while they're in the kitchen! (laughs) That's kinda nice."

Relatedness

In her life in general, Brandy feels a strong sense meaningful connection to all of her family members and some of her long time friends. Unlike Laura and Australia, Brandy does not appear to be involved in community volunteer work, and thus does not feel meaningfully connected in that area of her life. She used to be involved with a card playing group, but no longer has time for that and attributes it to how everything tends to take longer to do as one ages.

"Well, whenever we're doing things as a family, or ... uh, you know, *visiting* people... I just uh, feel *close* to everyone on *my* side and... and my husband's side. So we try to help each other –*everybody* tries to help each other.

I have *friends*, yah, that –we like to do things together ... and some that go back a *long, long* way! (chuckles) So, I enjoy *that*.

I don't have *groups* anymore (clears throat), but I used to... but uh –yah, we used to play cards, but I can't work everything in anymore! (says with a chuckle) Like, it *takes longer* to do things."

In Exercise

Competence

Brandy feels very confident in her ability to exercise and feels that there is only one thing that can prevent her from accomplishing her exercise-related goals is something she is trying to prevent by exercising: osteoarthritic spasms.

"Well, *very* confident... yah. There *isn't* anything that ... will make me unable to do it, *unless* ... I have –every two years I get –it's funny- in July, I get um ... a *spasm* with this osteoarthritis ... so I'm trying to keep it –like *being* flexible, I think, holds it back... but I have to be very careful with *how* I do certain things... so, at *home* I can trigger it by *gardening* or something like that, so I always make sure I wear a back belt when I do things like that, but... it doesn't ... I don't have a problem with it when I *do* these exercises... so, it's just that –you know, maybe you bend the wrong way and something happens, then I can't straighten out and then –I don't like taking pills, but they prescribe a muscle relaxer... so, I'm trying to avoid that and hoping that this exercise will *delay* that problem (laughs). *That's* better than pills! (laughs) Too many side effects!"

When she first started she did not feel any less confident in her ability to exercise because she has always lived an active lifestyle, going for long walks and bike rides with her husband. She likes exercising at the YMCA better though, because it is a more well-rounded experience for her as it allows her to work out different muscles.

“We used to ride uh... the bike for ... at *least* an hour, maybe *two hours* outside, cycling and I walked until my husband’s knees went and then I walked by myself, you know, maybe four miles and *always* did *something* like that to keep flexible ... and that helped me uh –the walking helped a lot too... but, I like the Y because I’m using different muscles.”

Autonomy

With the exception of adding *new* machine exercises to her program, in her exercise behaviour there is no one that Brandy feels required to answer to or make compromises with, so she feels very much in charge of her exercise behaviour and likes being able to modify her resistance training program. She feels, however, more in control of her choices and actions in exercise when she feels able to complete the task herself. For instance, there are some machines which she would like to use, but has been advised not to use because of her bone condition.

“(giggles) ... Well, I don’t have to *ask* anybody, I just say “This is what I’m going to do”... so, as long as I –I feel *physically* able, then I’m in control there. I keep -*well*, I started on the *program* and I’m doing the same weights that I was doing when I left, but then I’ll be anxious to add something else. The only thing we’re avoiding is anything that might cause a problem with the osteoarthritis ... so, *certain* machines I can’t *use*, but there’s others that I probably will be able to.”

Because she is a new exerciser, Brandy has no reservations in handing over some decision making to her exercise instructor or personal trainer because she feels safer engaging in new activities when lead by someone who is educated in what she is learning to do.

“Well, no, I don’t mind at all. –Like, when you’re in your class, you’ve got your instructor and she’s showing you how to do different things, so... I like to see somebody that can do it and see if *I* can do it. (chuckles)

You have to *know* how to do things, so... it doesn’t –you *have* to have an instructor in some cases, ‘cause then you’re going to do it *properly* and you won’t hurt yourself. [The personal trainer] actually checked the four months... that I *did* and continued with exactly the same exercises, only *lower* weights to begin and I’m *almost* back up to that –where I left off, so... *they* set up everything for me. Yah, and then if I want to *add* something or if I want to *increase* my weight, then I can do that with the machines... on my own So, I don’t have to ask –if I want to add something, then I would have to ask someone...”

Relatedness

Brandy enjoys the camaraderie of the exercise classes and has met some people whom she likes. Like Laura, she has also run into people she already knows who, like Australia, consider having friends in their classes as an added “bonus” to the exercise experience.

From the start she has felt meaningfully connected to her exercise instructors, but it took a little longer to develop those connections with her classmates.

“Yah, I’ve met a few people here and, as a matter of fact, in the class a... woman used to be in the choir with me at church and I –and *she* –so she’s in the *class* and we just met a couple weeks ago, so ... that was a nice feeling. As she said, it was a *bonus* ... to meet up... and other women are very... very friendly. When you’re doing the weights you’re on your own, but when you’re in the *class* ... then you have that camaraderie (giggles) and that’s nice. I’m *quiet*, so yah, I wasn’t connected right off the start, but it didn’t take long.”

I had someone set [my weight program] up for me, so... I think that they’re *very* helpful. I feel *quite* connected. I *did*; right from the beginning. It’s a good feeling to have someone there to help you if you have a problem. I know they’re *there* for you when you need them.”

Need Value

In Relation To Herself as a Person

In relation to herself as a person, Brandy feels that all three needs are equally important to her and that when she feels like she *has* all of those things in her life, she is better off. Interestingly, she speculates that one’s confidence in their abilities may vary in importance over one’s lifetime, depending on the activity and one’s physical condition.

“Well, I’d have to put [Relatedness] first; *this* is very important to me ... and I like to be in charge of my decisions, so ... I could put that up there too! And confidence in my abilities is just... it’s the same, because uh, well I *like* to be connected to others and I *like* to be in charge of my own decisions and I -of course you *want* to be confident in your abilities.

You might feel differently about it at different times in your life, your confidence, depending on your *strengths*. That’s right, ‘cause even uh –you know, *walking* sometimes you feel, “Oh, I feel a little *shaky*!” sometimes –you know? And that’s going with... the *age* problem.”

In The Eyes of Society

Brandy had a difficult time trying to figure out how she thinks other people place importance on the three needs. In the end she decided that she felt most people want to be meaningfully connected to others and that those are more important to people in general than being in charge of one’s decisions and behaviours and confidence in one’s abilities.

“I find that hard to... determine. *Other* people... well, if I’m thinking of *other* people, I have no idea! (laughs) You know? ... I have no idea why *society* does, but... does -feels that way... I think *everybody* wants to ... uh, have some connection to others...”

As an Exerciser

As an exerciser, relatedness is the least important need to Brandy because, whether in a group or not, the experience is a personal one and she feels it is all up to her to do it; everyone is doing their own thing. Furthermore, the experience is about doing what *you* can do and listening to what your body is telling you. Competence and autonomy were equally most important because she feels that without the authority to decide to exercise, she would not have the opportunity to pursue it and that as an exerciser it is important to have confidence in her abilities in order to be successful. Because she has not been exercising for very long, she believes that she would have placed the needs in the same order when she first started her program.

“Okay... I have to have confidence in my abilities ... and meaningful connections to other uh... would be in second place, because uh... if I’m exercising I’m thinking about what *I* can do... so that –that wouldn’t matter that much. *Most* of the exercises you’re doing on your own, you know, even in the group, because you do... what *you* can do... so... uh, some people *can’t* do it and they –they don’t *have* to do it. They don’t *expect* you to ... to do something that *hurts* ... and then of course, I want to be *in charge* so that I can *do* what I’m capable of doing.”

As an older female adult initiating exercise with health concerns, Brandy is comforted in knowing that she is not required or expected to push herself to the limit while exercising and that she has the freedom to tailor her experience to how her body is feeling.

“Well, it’s –it’s good because *you* know when it *hurts*... so if she asked you to do a certain thing and you’re not physically able, then you don’t –she tells you *not* to do it and you wouldn’t do it if you know it’s going to hurt... cause a problem in a certain area...”

Connecting the Needs to Motivation

Brandy feels that all of the needs matter, but that they are not all equally important in terms of motivation for exercise, and not everyone is motivated in a similar fashion.

“Well... it *all* matters ... you know, I –I just have *my* –everybody is motivated in a different *way* ... so, I ... I think all of those things are important ... you have to be confident to be motivated... so, and... your –you want to be in charge when you’re going to exercise, so... and the meaningful –meaningful connections that uh... it’s not as important with the *motivation*: it’s how *you* feel inside... or what you’re capable of.”

In life in general, she feels that all of the needs have an important influence on her motivation in general. She sees this relationship especially with relatedness in that the more closely connected she feels to someone, the more motivated she is to do things with and for them. Also she feels that being in charge of one’s decisions and behaviours is

important in her general motivation because she is more likely to procrastinate if she does not feel as though she has some ownership in the decision to perform the behaviour.

“Well, yah, everything –everything is important (chuckles) ... You wouldn’t be able to do things if you weren’t confident... it’s uh, it’s a good feeling to be connected to others ... and when you have that closeness, you uh... like to do different things –or do things for others.

(Chuckles) Well, you *have* to be in charge to... to *do* ... certain things. So if you – if you’re not in charge ... you’re just –aren’t going to do things, you can –it’s easy to put it aside.”

Well-Being and Exercise

Brandy considers her mental well-being to be “pretty good” in general. During and after exercising, however, “it’s great!” and she feels that her quality of life has improved since starting her formal exercise program. She has also come to understand why people become addicted to exercise, experiencing the instant gratification of positive affect and greater stamina.

“Yah, I feel ... I feel great. I have uh –it just *charges* me! ... to exercise. I think you can get uh, *hooked* on it... you know, I only went that four months, but *then* I was *so* disappointed that I couldn’t *go*. Well, we went to California and did a lot of walking, but it broke up my routine, you know and I –I can see how people get hooked on exercise. Yah, I feel... it almost give you um... a *high* –you know? That um... you can handle a lot of things that maybe you couldn’t have, so *that’s* a good feeling. Like, I figured after two hours of exercise, I’d want to go home and sit down, but I *don’t* (says with a laugh)... –you know, then... I just *do* what I have to do and it’s –it’s no challenge.”

Brandy says she experienced these same feelings when she first started exercising and that it is comparable to the good feelings she experiences in other activities at home.

“Yes, yep, yah, it *was*... and it’s the same as I would feel if I was uh –if I did something at *home*, like go for a bike ride, cut the grass, and something like that that always made me feel good”.

Need Thwarting

Competence

If having a good day mentally, Brandy would not be disheartened if her exercise was not as good as usual and she feels that she would have felt that way even when she first started. Like Laura and Australia, she would just shrug it off and plan to do better the next day. If obstacles come into her path, she does not let give up on the activity, she just reminds herself that it is okay if it takes longer than she would like to reach her goal, because she has come to tolerate the fact that as she ages “it takes longer to do things”

“Well, I wouldn’t be depressed ... I would feel I’ll do better next time. So, I know... I think I *know* my limitations, you know? It wouldn’t uh, get me down in any way. I—I would feel... “Well, I couldn’t do it *today*, but I’ll do it *next time*”. So I wouldn’t *give up* on it, I’d still try to get to the level I want to be at. You know, when I set a goal and I—I stick to it, even if it *hurts* (says with a laugh). I know everybody else is going through it too at this age. We all tell each other (laughs) how “I used to be able to do *that* in *half* the time, I can’t figure it out!” So, even if you’re exercising things *do* take longer... so, we just... tolerate *that*... (laughs) do what we can *when* we can.”

Autonomy

As a new exerciser, if on a good day, Brandy’s exercise instructor were to take more control of her exercise program than usual, it wouldn’t bother her as long as they were being helpful and she feels that she would have felt the same way when she first started. If, on the other hand, she felt that their extra involvement was making her feel worse, she would inform them that she could not abide by their instruction.

“Well, I’d feel they were *helpful*! (says with a laugh) ‘Cause I could use the help! (laughs) I wouldn’t mind if they’re trying to help me, sure.”

Relatedness

Brandy was less certain on how she would feel if she were not to experience the same meaningful connections she has become accustomed to through exercise. She likes the social aspect of her exercise class, but it is of secondary importance to her, so she feels that it would not bother her greatly if that sense of meaningful connection was lessened on a given day.

“Well, I—I don’t know *how* that would make me feel... In the *class*—we don’t... - *some* women visit... but, like *I* want to do ... and a lot of them *do* want to ... get the *most* we can out of the class, so it will help our... physical situation... so then we *don’t* ... socialize.

Well, it doesn’t *bother* me... it just uh... I mean everybody’s that way; some days they feel like talking and other days they don’t... so... I’m *there* to do the exercises and that’s the important thing. I figure I’ve got 45 minutes... and I could talk *any* time when I’m *not* there and I—I don’t want to waste the time talking and missing ... what we’re supposed to be doing”

Last Class

Competence

Before coming into the YMCA for her last class, Brandy had felt very low with having lost her brother-in-law just days earlier. Though she was not confident her ability to

physically carry out the exercises, she was eager to go to the Y because she felt that exercise would help her feel more confident in her ability to cope with her loss.

“*Quite* low, because uh... you know, it was a real struggle and we were all involved and...I felt that I *needed* the exercise, ‘cause we just lost my brother-in-law on Monday, and so ... that kind of made me feel better and able to deal with things. I didn’t know if I could do the exercise... but I thought, “If I try, it might help me”... and it did.”

Like Australia, Brandy has not experienced the death of a classmate since she has started attending classes at the YMCA, but she has noticed that the people she used to exercise with have disappeared for various reasons.

“See, just being back for a *month* and then I was –when I *came* for that four months –now there’s people –I’ve been away for five months and I came back and there’s people not *there*... -you know, and I didn’t *realize*, so I’m just ... finding out and asking where certain people are and that’s how I’m finding out. Yah... *that* would be hard.”

Though exercising made her feel more able to cope with her emotions, while she was there she did not feel capable in her ability to exercise because she found herself coming down with her present cold

“Not very capable! Because then I was coming down with that horrible cold (says with a laugh), so I really had a *reason*, you know (says with a laugh). I –I felt –I wouldn’t have –I was going to try and come in and exercise on the Saturday, but the cold took over, so I just couldn’t do it... to make up for Friday...”

Autonomy

In the face of tragedy and dealing with an aspect of life that is out of one’s control, Brandy still felt in charge of her decisions and behaviours before coming to the YMCA that day.

“Well, I still felt *in charge*... (I: mhmhm) you know, it’s just uh, sort of an emptiness at losing someone... (I: mhmhm) and what *he* went through, that’s all...”

During and after her exercise, Brandy’s sense of being in charge of her decisions and behaviours remained the same as usual because there was no one/nothing to stop her from doing the exercises she usually does.

“Oh, just as in charge as any other time ... I –I was able to do everything... that’s on my list.”

Relatedness

Naturally, after experiencing the death of a loved one, Brandy felt as though her sense of meaningful connection to others was lacking that morning before she came into the YMCA. This feeling remained even during and after her exercise, as she was not concerned with connecting with others at that time.

“Not too... you know, I just wanted to get in there, do the exercise and get out ... that was my feeling *that day*.”

3: Initiate Group: Australia

Participant Characteristics

Australia is a functionally independent 66 year old initiate exerciser with a BMI of 26.5. She typically expends 1205.5 kcal of energy each week on physical activity, with the majority of her energy expenditure occurring through vigorous physical activity during her leisure time. She has been following her formal exercise regimen for just under 6 months, engaging in activities such as walking, resistance training, calisthenics, and stretching exercises as part of an informal class at the YMCA that was initiated by a group of older female adult members approximately 10 years ago. It is not listed as part of the YMCA programming, but the YMCA has recently started providing an instructor one day a week to introduce new exercises to the group. At the time of the interview, Australia had just recovered from the flu and it was her first day back to exercising afterwards.

Why/Reasons & Motives

Knowledge & Solution to a Problem (Exercise as Therapy)

Australia began actively seeking out new knowledge on health because she believes that it is very important to maintain good health in older age and she sees exercise as one solution to her health problems. She also feels that by preparing for the future, it helps her psychologically in the present. Her reason for beginning a formal exercise program was to achieve a wide range of physical, psychological, and spiritual benefits, reflecting the presence of identified regulation. The most important reason for her, however, was because she wants to be proactive in aging so that she can optimize her health and well-being, and to prevent herself from becoming infirm.

“Well, I exercise um... because I know I need to be fit... and *strong* into old age *and* it’s one of those things that’s sort of addictive –once you start you really look forward to it and... it’s a wonderful accomplishment when you see yourself getting better and able to do things... easier. Um, the other thing is my balance. I’ve noticed that my balance hasn’t been good and I *knew* from ... -reading, that I needed to develop better *core* balance and... to give you more stamina to get through your day tired –so you’re not so *tired* and... so you can do the things you want to do and not feel *tired* all the time... and a lot of people get very *old* at a very young age.”

I *came* with good intentions thinking this is going to be the *answer*. I am going to *really* –because I’ve told you, I was worried about my balance and um... one of the balance things is that uh, because I’ve been on this cortisone/prednisone for all these

years, one of the *bad* things it does is thin your skin and I have had ... maybe *twelve* lots of stitches because I have... knocked my leg on something... *and* so, I have to be really ... careful about that, and um... one of the *recent* ones was (says with a bit of a laugh) – last summer I was helping my little grandson ride his bicycle and he's got the training wheels, you know, he's five and half now and –anyway I turned and tried and help him up the driveway, and I mean, I just *fell* and had a *big* gash in my leg and *then* I was out walking with my daughter sometime afterwards... *and... again* I fell and I just –and I noticed –I didn't hurt myself that time- and I *noticed* that I fell *easily* and of course if I had *known* about core strength and balance and *that* was -it was almost like having the perfect fit when my friend said “why don't you come to my *class*?”... and it's, you know, we lift weights and it's –you balance on a ball and it's really good for *that*. Then I realized that... that was what I needed –and it is exactly what I need ...”

“I used to ride a bike and *then*, I remember one day crashing near a tree and I fell –see that was my balance. I didn't hurt myself, I mean I just... *grazed* my finger or something ... but –and I've done a little bit -but I've still got my bike in my garage, but I ... I don't know, I guess, I think I'm *walking* and... it's better to walk somehow... anyway”

Appearance

Aside from the health related benefits of physically active lifestyles, Australia is also motivated to exercise for improved physical appearance through weight management. Though not declared as a primary reason for exercising, this element of external regulation is a common theme throughout her interview.

“The other thing was, uh... which I haven't mentioned before, is um, that I, you know, after *menopause* women *do* put on weight and it's very difficult to look nice in your clothes *and* it's hard to lose that weight *and* um... I find although I haven't *lost* a lot of weight, I did in the *beginning*, but it sort of stream-lined me and I look better in my clothes and I can wear clothes that I haven't been able to wear for a long time, so... that's important –aesthetically, it's important too. Does [exercise] change your outlook on life? I don't really think so, but it does make you feel better in your *clothes*! You're “Oh! Now, *you've* lost weight!” you know, and you feel *so* good. I mean, we *all* feel good when people think we look nice in our clothes”

Times Are Changing

Australia feels that society in general has become much more sedentary and that the idea of purposeful exercise probably would have sounded silly to people in the past.

“You *do* need um, you know, from the days when –you know, you chopped your own wood and did all those things, think of *those* people; how they'd laugh at us exercising. They didn't even ride bicycles!”

Influential People- In Exercise

When asked about *who* motivates her for exercise, Australia responded with a very confident “I do”, which could suggest intrinsic regulation. After elaborating, however, it was uncovered that she motivates herself because she values the health benefits associated with exercise and feels it is important to her to feel better and have more energy so that she can better serve the other important people in her life. As such, this reflects a more identified or integrated form of extrinsic regulation.

“I just *feel* that it makes you feel better in life, you know, it gives you more *energy*. It just makes you a better person and um... um... you have to keep yourself fit so that you can help other people, you know, um... I have quite a few people that I *do* things for and uh, I mean, one of them is my little granddaughter. You know, I have to lift her up and it's, you know, she's not *light*, she's six -18 months [corrects herself] and she's a **heavy** little thing and *oh!* You know, *not* like the groceries! So, you need to –you just need to keep physically fit. Some people *are* exercising, of course, regularly but it seems to fall through the cracks, which is so *stupid* when you *see* the people in the nursing homes -how decrepit they *are*. It's um -anyway, and so *I'm* the one who motivates myself and I really do feel uh, you know, that it's integral to part of being, you know, successful aging –I guess, is it. You don't know what other things you can *prevent*, but... *being* –trying to be physically fit is really important.”

Though she feels that *she* is the most influential person in her own exercise behaviour, her friend Lonna has been an *indirect* influence for her because she is a source of inspiration and looks up to her like a role model.

“Well, the *friend* who told me about this exercise program, I mean that's uh... that's the *one* and when I know –she does *all* the –she cross-country skis and uh, goes away –but then um... she is uh... separated from her husband, well is *divorced* and so she has a more *free* kind of way, you know and is able to just go away with the girls every February for this or that or the other; skiing and uh... so, it makes a big difference”

Friends have often been a source of encouragement and invitation to activity for Australia.

“As a young woman, um... there was a teacher on my block and we used to play basketball at the highschool on Tuesday nights when our husbands were home minding the children -that was a lot of fun, that was good in sport.

I was about 40 when I got sick and I had a friend who had a dog and she'd be “Come on, Australia!” (chuckles) “Why don't we take the short cut today?” and she'd go an extra 30 minutes... ah! She's coming to visit this fall –she's a New Zealander and uh, she sort of got me interested and “Come on!” [taps her finger on the table], you know?”

Influential People-in General

The most influential people in her life in general include her husband, her children and grandchildren, her friend Lonna, her mother, her mother-in-law, and sister-in-law. Given

Australia's position on exercising with a group of women, it is unsurprising that she became most illuminated when speaking of the closeness she feels to the females in her life.

"I have a *daughter*, who I'm really close to, who has this little *baby* and um, and my friend Lonna, you know, I think, you know, she's *really* ... *ya*, she's been my friend for years and years, we taught CGIT and Sunday school and things together, so we've been friends for a long time and uh, when we were the mothers of teenagers, you know, she'd call and say "*Oh!* Listen to what this one's done!" and I'd call and say "*Oh!*" (laughs) you know... or I'd call her and she'd say "*Oh!* Think nothing of *that*; wait 'til I tell you about *mine!*" So, you know, those sort of things which *all* women need when they're –when they're raising children, because –you know, you *do* think that you've got the *worst*, or the *smartest* kid in the world and –it depends which way it goes! So... um, yes, I guess she *has* influenced me... and of course, my *mother* –my mother's *dead* now, of course, but um, we had a *warm*, wonderful relationship. My mother didn't work –well, what do I say? She was a house –a *farmer's* wife, so she worked her head off! (says with a chuckle) Busy, busy, busy um... but um, you know, we were... –she was *demonstrative* and uh, you know, *loving* and you never *doubted* that you didn't have your parents' *love* ... and um, I was the only girl in the family *I* um... was at *home* as a young child and then at age 13, as I've said, *off* to boarding school and so... I was away from my mother *then*... um... and *then* I did nursing –Registered Nurse- and was doing my nursing training, so I didn't live at *home* and then, of course, I came away to Canada, so I didn't *have* a mother to, you know, "What am I going to do about this *child?*" or... didn't *have* that sort of person. I had a mother-in-law I was close to. She was wonderful. Lived near by and ... a great source... and a sister-in-law who is still living... and *she* has been close to me as well."

Moving to Canada

After marrying and moving to Canada, Australia still felt close to her mother, but because of the technology of the time, the distance caused a strain on their relationship.

"When I came to Canada –you know, I thought, "Whoopee!", you know, here's this wonderful Prince Charming and I remember *leaving* and I thought "What have I done?". We were married in Australia –then you *think*, you know, you're going to be *away* from your parents all that time... and in those days there was no, uh, telephone call that cost –that cost *ten* cents. You phoned maybe once a *year* and it was a pre-arranged call and it would cost maybe \$25 for 3 minutes: "*Hello-WhatYou-Oh-HaveANice-Ya?Yes!Oh!NiceOne-HowLovely-Hellooo?YesYes-HowYouBeen?-MerryChristmas!*" [said *very* rapidly] and that would be your conversation for a *year*! There was a lot of letter writing, but uh, you know... she didn't live into the fax age or... *computer* age. So, you know, it's different now. You get people –I bet you have friends all over the world, it's so easy to keep in touch –*instantly* with them: "How you feeling *today?*", "Fine!", "Great. Goodnight", "Good-bye", you know. It's so easy.... Mhmmm, but still she was a –you know, a *strong* influence in my life. She was a good person, you know, involved in the community, set all of us good examples ... **bad** smoker! –**bad** example! (laughs)"

Exercise during Childhood

Australia has always been an active person both in recreational activities and competitive sports. Growing up in a financially well off farming family and attending boarding school in Australia, she was constantly engaged in some kind of physical activity as a child, especially in tennis, horse-riding, and various types of ball games such as cricket which her brother always made her play with him. All in all, she considered her life in Australia to be a very active, “outside existence”

“There was a lot of *sport*, uh... my –uh, we had lots of *space*... my mother and dad had *golf* clubs –we’d be outside swinging our *golf* clubs... horseback riding –I had a horse! When you went for your summer holidays you went to the *beach*, there was like the first thing your parents signed you up was for swimming lessons, off you went to *those*. So it was *very* active –*football* [Aussie rules football] um, all those ball games, you know and uh, in the playground there was *skipping* all the time. We used to play a game with two balls, you know, that you had to *catch* and ... those games don’t *exist* anymore. I have a little sister in the Big Brothers kind of movement and I teach her some of these things and –I mean, they’re *fun* and they’re *hard*, they get... anyway, *those* sorts of things –it was very active ...”

Where she lived it was not uncommon for females to be active in sport because it was a “lovely family sort of thing, so... everyone was very *sporty*”. Today, having lived her adult life in Canada, she feels that society has become much more sedentary”

“Being *female*, I really –except for the boys’ rough and tumble of ... getting injured ... at sports um, I don’t think it was any different. It was very, when I think of it, far more *sports* oriented ... for *everybody* than it is today. They certainly knew that fitness was important. It wasn’t expensive to join [the tennis club] –*everybody* could afford to join... um... off you went... at *tea* time, everybody –it was called ‘Ladies Bring A Plate’ –now here’s *ladies*, so the wife would bring a little plate of sandwiches or little... biscuits, whatever it is that you made you’d bring along –and maybe it’s *your* turn to make the tea today; next week’ll be *my* turn. It’s going to be *doubles* now, so I’ll be minding *your* children and you’ll be minding *mine* while I’m playing *my* –it was a *lovely* country way and *not* expensive. Now what would that cost today? There’s *nothing* like it today. If they had child care, you’d be paying for it, right? I’ve always felt that the answer to children today: you have to teach them the love of sport. Not the love of watching a football game, the love of playing one –all of the kids. There’s a lot of spectator sport today, isn’t there?

Exercise during Adulthood

As a young adult Australia took up various forms of physical activity, such as Dance Fit classes, golf, running, and skipping, none of which she adhered to over the long term, mainly due to time restraints and family/community responsibilities. After being diagnosed with her condition, however, it was walking and bird watching that she took up as leisure activities and she continues to pursue them today. Though regular, this physical

activity was unstructured and is thus not classified as formal ‘exercise’. As an older adult she made the decision to begin formal ‘exercise’ because she felt that she wasn’t doing enough, based on the reading she had been doing, and because her doctor recommended she begin resistance training to improve her bone density which had been weakened due to the use of pharmaceutical drugs. This reflects a third form of regulation present in Australia’s motivation for exercise as an initiate, introjected regulation.

“I just knew I needed *more*, and the more you *read* –you read about weight exercises –my doctor said it’s good for your bones um, I’ve taken a drug –um, Cortisone/Prednisone for –since I was 40 because I was ill and I still have to take it and that affects your bones and I *knew* that I **should** be doing these things and uh, you know, you read a lot about osteoporosis. My doctor has *never* said “You’re going to be dead if you don’t *do* something”, you know, I’ve never had *that*, ‘cause they don’t. They sort of say “Now a little *weight* lifting would be good” –that was a *long* time ago.

Walking is what I did before I came to this class when I was –well, I think I was about 40 when I got sick and because I had this *nerve* damage and I was *told* to do some exercise, and that got me doing it all the time. Before that I’d been to –I’d done Dance Fit. When I was a young, uh, was it mother? Or before that? I guess it was when I was a young mother, there was a skipping thing that came out –I think it was a Doctor Cooper –it was the 5BX thing, you know? And *then* 20 minutes of skipping was supposed to be wonderful... and I’ve still got my rope and I’m sure that well, I know that I made almost a *bare* patch in the carpet in front of the television in –in our home in Owen Sound and um... and I used to do that um, I think –I don’t know if it was three times a week –or five times a week, but I was *religious* about that... and then when we *moved* to St. Catharines, I didn’t have an indoor location for it –the ceilings were too low and so [taps her finger on the table]... I think that’s when I went off to Dance Fit, which I enjoyed *too*, but *again* “Let’s get in the car... be somewhere at a certain time –*rush* home for the children at lunch” hmmm. Well, *yes*, and uh...something. You know, when your family grows *up* and you’ve got the *house* to look after, you uh ... you know, worked a bit and volunteer work, you just ... anyway.”

Taking Back ‘Me’ Time

Now that Australia is an older adult and her children are grown up, she feels that she has more freedom to do things for herself.

“You know, when you have *children* you uh, if you run around for yourself a lot, you –you get too stressed when you have to do things for the family and so, of course, what you give up is what you like to do for yourself ... for a while. I think maybe I *am*, *yes* ... I don’t have to think “Can I afford this?”. You suddenly think, you know, *all* those years where you *didn’t* do this because you *had* to *this* –or ... you know, the *children*, the *family*...”

Competition

Given her experience in competitive sports, it is unsurprising that Australia has a competitive element in her approach to exercise and that she is inspired by her friend Lonna's drive and perseverance.

"Well, I guess there is a competitive nature in *all* of us, isn't there? And I noticed my friend who usually does the 5 lb weights (says with a laugh), you know, and *often* um... the instructor—she's the sort of person, the instructor will say "Well, just—you know, just put your arms so-and-so, so-and-so" well, no she *won't*! She'll do *more* than we're asked to do. So uh... you know, and I mean she *walks* to her class in the morning with her friend too and you know, to be here for 7 o'clock—*most* of the time she does, anyway... and then I've seen her—she bicycles too. She lives downtown and she cycles around"

"No, you do um, —you know, you just um... it's just really important. —It is an empowering sort of thing, you know, you come in the morning to the Y and uh, you see the 5 o'clock ones going out and they're looking at *me* very smugly (says with a chuckle) and when I'm walking out at 8 and the stragglers are coming in at 9 and I think "Ah! Nah! What *lazy* bums you are!" (laughs) So *that* euphoria lasts for 5 minutes (laughs)"

Stress Relief

Australia feels that exercising in a class setting is stressful because of the concentration required to complete each task, whereas continuous movement exercise, such as walking, is a better source of stress relief for her because it allows her to sort through her everyday problems in her head.

"One of the things that *walking* does... um, I found it really releases stress, now... *this* [referring to the exercise class]—so concentrated on all the "Yes, put the ball *here*" and "*Oh*, can I do another one?" You're not thinking "*Oh*, this is"—I mean, it is stressful... exercising, isn't it? But when you *walk*, I think that's a *real* ... stress release ... 'cause I remember a time when I had just went through a hard time with a job that was just a part time job and I remember walking along—what I wasn't going to say to *this* one and I'd say *that* to the other and walk, walk, walk—and of course, I never said anything to *anyone*, but it *does*, it releases all those... sort of bad feelings and then when I um... go *birding*, you know, you see these beautiful birds and you realize how much more beautiful they are than *people*... um... you know, it's just *again*...it's ... and you're thankful to be *alive* in this wonderful country and yeah... so um, so it *does*, I think—I think walking is *really* beneficial"

Time and Effort

Australia feels that her desire for exercise influences the *effort* she puts in "a hundred percent" and that seeing other people in the class struggling like she does makes the challenge easier for her, but that there are limits to the amount of *time* she is willing to spend on exercise. She feels that exercise isn't her *life*, but a support for her life.

“I mean you’re doing it, you’re just sort of –you just carry on. You –you *never* sort of feel –I mean *everybody* says funny things like “Oh! Let’s go home now!” and “Oh!” the best, you know “Three deep breaths –*wonderful!* Relax”, you know –and it’s sort of *helpful* hearing other people grunting and groaning or saying “Ah! That nearly killed me!”... and then something that’s hard –this is interesting, ‘cause something that’s hard for me isn’t hard for somebody else... so, um... yeah, you um...yeah... yeah, you just want to uh, you just want to do the best you can.

I don’t think I would ever start marathon running, that sort of –you know how people do, they sort of *get into* it and all of a sudden they’re off to *Hawaii* and all around the world. *No*... I’m not that –I’m not that kind of person, but I *do* know that the –the addictive feeling of “Here we go!” you know, “We’re off to our” “Oh!” you know, you get up in the morning and then as soon as you get there and you think –and then you get into it –now, It’s not that “Oh! Let’s go on for another hour today!” –I don’t have that kind of feeling. I have that feeling, “Oh, I did it all ... and I’ve exercised and um... I feel, you know, that kind of ... sense of *well-being*.

Now, maybe I should –people *do* come in and they run and they’ll have a swim afterwards. The other morning I came and I saw a woman say to her husband at the elevator, he said to her –came in at 7, he said, “About 10 o’clock then?” “Yes, about 10”... I’m too impatient. I’m an impatient person and I could *never* come for three hours. I’d rather be running off to see how someone is than... spending that much time. I don’t think we’re put on this Earth to be that concerned about ourselves... but still, you’ve got to be the best you *can*.”

Extra Exercise/Making Up For Missed Exercise

While she does place limits on the *time* she dedicates to exercise, Australia, like Laura, feels that the more active she is, the more unplanned physical activity she is compelled to do. Also, when she knows she is going to be missing class time, she wants to make up for it with alternative forms of exercise.

“I think I’ve only missed about three times... uh... since I started... and, uh, maybe the other day was the *fourth* –and I certainly couldn’t do any –and I think today it was really *hard* for me and it’s because I’d been lying in bed most of the wee –well, all day Friday and all day –most of the day Saturday too to sleep [due to illness]... not *doing* anything ... so um... so, on another –if I had to miss because I had my *granddaughter* I’d *certainly* make sure I moo -moved *smartly*, you know and run up and down the stairs –a bit extra. Do you know what I’m saying? You know, I didn’t get it so, oh! Go get her! You know, up and down that [referring to staircases at a program she takes her granddaughter to]. So, yes, you do have that feeling you’ve missed it today, so you better ... you can’t really make up for it *exactly*, but you *try*. I *do* try to walk on the days that I don’t do my exercise and ... part of coming here *and* feeling that I’m getting a really good workout and developing these muscles and *strong* legs and *seeing* myself able to do things that I *couldn’t* do in the beginning... um, makes me think, um... “Oh, well, you know, I can probably –I’ll probably go out at 1 o’clock today, on a Saturday (says with a chuckle) for a walk... I was even thinking before “*Oh!* What am I going to do when we go to Jamaica?!” I thought, “Oh, I’ll buy a couple of tho –I’ll buy one of *those* [makes

arm movements to demonstrate the use of rubber tubing], you know, I'll be able to do *that* and... uh, but as it turns out, I'm not *in* Jamaica" (laughs)"

Weather & Intentions

While Laura is planning to take the summer off from her program at the YMCA because it will be "too hot" and she would rather pursue other forms of activity, Australia has no intentions of stopping. This is not surprising given that she is at the cusp of the maintenance stage while Laura is at the very beginning of her initiate experience. Because she has been active this long, she has been able to experience the long term benefits associated with her exercise program, which Laura has not, and thus the value of the 'product' outweighs the 'costs'. Australia does, however, recognize that the weather plays a role in the amount of outdoor exercise she does.

"I think [not choosing to do extra exercise] has *a lot* to do with the winter because, you know, it *hasn't* been good.... winter ... for walking, um... although *last* year I got -I have a pair of those, um, things that you put on your shoes -**tracks!** To help you walk on the ice and *many* is the time I used that last year when I *wasn't* coming to the class because I'd sort of feel that "I've *got* to get up and get my walk in this morning" and uh... so, um... I mean, I'm committed to *coming* um... I'll be here in the *summer*... I mean, I can't see myself *stopping* this program, because ... I -you know, they're um... there are *too* many benefits ... that I can *see*... every day!"

Important People/Family

Though it was her doctor who recommended she start lifting weights, it was her long time friend Lonna who played possibly the most influential role in Australia's exercise adoption. Not only is Lonna living with a condition that Australia is hoping to avoid, but she is successfully involved in a form of exercise that a) would help Australia achieve her goals, and b) Australia is actually interested in.

"A friend recommended this program, which I didn't know existed, and a few people at the Y know exists and... I came along and I found it *so hard* in the beginning, and so I know it's helped me a lot. She's been my friend for 30 years. *Yes*, and I knew she came to the Y and I knew she *had* oste -osteoporosis, where I -I was, you know... warding it off, um, and she was coming to the Y and I didn't *know* -I thought she was just using the machines and I never liked the idea of machines, I don't know *why*... I'd rather *do* something than... be passive, but -you know, this is *exercise*. It's pretty much in the same boat I suppose... *anyway*, I said to her one day, you know, how I *tried* -you know, "Here I am *trying* to lose weight, but I'm not good at it" and she said, "well, maybe you'd like my exercise class" and... it was just one of those little things she hadn't *told* me about. I knew she came to the Y, but I didn't realize the *class* and so *that's* actually how it happened."

Though Australia feels that no one but herself directly influences her motivation for exercise, she feels that Lonna has an indirect influence as a role model who inspires her.

“Well, the *friend* who told me about this exercise program, I mean that’s uh... that’s the *one* and when I know –she does *all* the –you know, she cross-country skis and uh, goes away –but then um... she is uh... separated from her husband, well is *divorced* and so she has a more *free* kind of way, you know and is able to just go away with the girls every February for this or that or the other; skiing and uh... so, it makes a big difference”

As a new exerciser, Australia considers her group to be a very important aspect of her exercise experience and motivation, not only because she enjoys the camaraderie and companionship of other women, but because she feels that they depend on her and thus is accountable for her attendance.

“I’ve said to myself now, I could go and buy a ball and it’s easy to get one of these stretchy things [referring to rubber tubing/elastic bands] and I *have* some weights –I think they’re 5 lbs- that I tried my hand at once... uh, it *would* be easier to do it at home *and* I think to myself, I am spending gas and am *not* greening the environment by driving my car three days a week to the Y ... *but*, I think that it’s the *group* that sort of motivates you”

“I bought some weights and I tried [at home] for a while, but –you know, you ... give up and sort of lose interest – I don’t know... that’s *why* I think if, you know, *buying* the equipment and trying it at home –you know, turn on the TV and there they *are*, doing their things, but there’s something about... the *group*... you don’t want to let the class down, you know, they’re sort of pals, so... there’s something about being with a group of women which I think –and *men* probably think for being with a group of *men*, but there’s something about that because they’re ... sisterly and “come on, Australia!” and “Oh, no! You put your ball *here*” and, you know, “Oh! Your ball’s got away from you –well, just run and get it” “It’ll come back to you!” (laughs) It does that.”

This notion of accountability also extends to herself, in that she is confident that she will adhere because she has made a financial investment. These sentiments of ‘obligation’ reflect an introjected regulation of her exercise behaviour.

“There’s the *appeal* of [the group], but there’s also the *knowing* that I will keep going and I’ve paid money, haven’t I? And so... I can’t –you know, I *missed* on Friday. There’s money down the drain! (chuckles) This way I’ve *paid my money*! ‘Cause it’s expensive, so you should *come* ... and I’m *enjoying* it and I’m *learning* and I’m *getting fit* ... it’s healthy. But you know, you do *feel* –and you know, you’ve got to –I guess I’m the sort of person who... *usually*, if they say they’re going to do something, I *do* it. Now ... I’ve said I was going to so many times –other things that are ... people can’t see, I suppose *that’s* it, but when someone else is depending on me –and I feel the leader of the class is, off I go. You sort of feel “Well we can’t let the group down” and you wouldn’t want to miss *Wednesday* because Amy will be here on Wednesday”

Though she does not think it is necessary, given the right leader, she feels that having an exercise instructor and classmates that are close to her own age is a comfort when first starting to exercise and that it helps motivate her to persevere and be as self-disciplined as they are.

“Well, *our* instructor *is*, as you know, 75 and I try to do –I think, “If Linda’s doing that, and she’s got up at –*been* here since 5:15 *in the morning* and doing it, then *I* try to do it” you know... I guess we all have a few *rebellious* days when she’ll say, “Now, why don’t we do this!”. You think, “uhhhh!”, but *mostly* –I mean, I *do* have that... *in* me... “Let’s keep up here!”... you know, *everyone* else here is eating a salad today ... *you* eat a salad –*that* kind of, you know ... so, try to be self-disciplined.

You know, they’re kind of very supportive of one another –and of the *leader* who is, I’ve told you, sixty -75! At first, I would say *definitely*, when I *came* it was very *comforting* to see that everybody else had *grey* hair and –and they were –it was *hard*... I’m not saying they had the same struggles as me, although there were struggles, but you can hear –you know, even in the leader’s voice: “fooorty... tweeenty...” [said with feigned exhaustion] and you knew it was a struggle for her *too*. Would I join a class downstairs of *step* aerobic young people –like... yourself? *No*, I probably wouldn’t”

The Experience

Now that Australia has been exercising for almost six months, she finds it easier to motivate herself to overcome former barriers and/or or obstacles such as time and weather.

“I think you just get caught up in the *whole thing*: That this is doing me *good* and I feel *good* about it and uh... it’s um, *nice* to go um... you know at 6 o’clock in the morning you think, “Oh, no!” you know, but at five past six you think “Off we go!” you know, and... “Oh! No! Not snow! *Quick!* Get out and shovel!” that kind of thing. So... it’s –it’s *very* um... *fulfilling* it really *is*”.

As a new exerciser, Australia was a bit intimidated when she first began her class, especially on the first day, because she felt like everyone else in the class was so much more advanced than she was.

“Well... uh, when I first began I remember my friend Lonna said “some people fall off their balls, Australia!” (says with a chuckle) I went and I just felt I was *so* hopeless. I’d wondered if I would get through the *first* one and afterwards went down and Lonna said “You look –do you feel faint?” (chuckles). Anyway, um... *but*, it was just very *slow* and then you see that everybody else is *so* good and they balance so well and –you know, I was –you know, it’s **hard**! Everybody else looked *so* thin and trim *and* there’s one woman who’s not there now, but she’s always opposite me and I always use her as my mirror, because she has just the *best* deportment you ever saw in your life! She’s just a little *minute* of a person ... and so, to begin with, you realize how much you learned and I honestly thought I was going to faint during that first lesson and when I went downstairs and the friend who brought me said “put your head down”, and I thought: “I don’t know if I’ll be able to do this”, *but*... of course, it *does* get easier and um, there are times when it’s really *hard*, I mean, I’ve got muscles that I’d never had before and my *legs* are stronger than they’ve ever been before –less *flabby*, um... still –you know, I’m *still* learning and uh, getting better –*I hope*...but um, it really *has* made, *I* think, a big dis -difference in um... in everything.”

Despite the difficulty of the exercise, she knew that she had a friend there who was successful with fitness, and that helped motivate her to keep coming back. Also, she *expected* exercise to improve her life, which may have contributed to her motivation to return.

“Well, you look around: there’s your best friend next to you and she’s just perhaps the most athletic of them all, you know, she lifts 5 lbs when the most of the others are maybe 4... and uh... I... um, –everybody... it’s like being new at anything; everybody else seems so wonderful. Now I look around and I say “well, they’re not -gosh, they can’t really do that very well at all!” and “Oh! They’re having a rest at that one!” so... (chuckles) that’s sort of, you know, you realize uh –and I’m still waiting for someone to come and *start* the way *I* did, but no one has yet (laughs), so I’ll be able to, you know, see how they’ve caught on to things... but um, it really... when I *began*, I mean, I knew it was going to be good. It’s like taking medicine; you know it’s going to be good for you and you think, “*Oh!*”, you know, “Can I stand it?” and “*Oh*, here it comes again!”... *but* it doesn’t seem to take long before you –you get into the –the good of it”

This expectation of exercise as a solution to a problem is also evident in Australia’s previous YMCA experience. After being diagnosed with her condition and suffering from nerve damage in her extremities, her rheumatologist recommended she try swimming as therapy. She attended one of the Y’s aquatic classes that are specifically for people with arthritis and are very low impact. Once her ailments had been relieved she quit, because the value of attending the class lessened as the cost of doing the activity (barriers) outweighed the perceived benefit (gaining strength).

“Now, first I was sent to rehab and I learned those exercises –the strengthening exercises that you do in the Y, so it wasn’t really *swimming*, but I *also* did some swimming... and I guess I –I enjoyed it because I knew it was going to get me well again... but after a while I just couldn’t *stand* this “Quick! It’s ten to seven, run out the door! Run down –” I just found it stressful to have to –and also we had to *drive* to do it, whereas, when I walk, I open my door and I walk out and I’m out in a beautiful green ravine and the birds are there and it’s heavenly... convenient, and –and -and less stressful. I *did it* for a while... until I felt that I had regained the strength I had lost and then I stopped. I had a relapse and I *knew* that swimming was going to be the thing and so then I –I would come and swim”.

Though Aqua Fit is open to all members and is typically attended by older female adults, she has not resumed aquatic exercise this time around because that form of exercise does not appeal to her and it does not suit her lifestyle.

“I’m not really driven to those programs. I like [this class] much *more*. I feel it’s more beneficial um... it’s um, one thing you’ve gotta get going in the morning *and I am* a morning person... but, it’s harder in the winter, um... and, when I’ve walked, I’ve always walked and then gone home and had breakfast, so I’m *used to* doing my exercise first, uh, and going on... and then you have your whole day *before* you. You know, if you’ve got to be somewhere at nine o’clock, you’re there at nine o’clock, so... *all* of that is really

good uh... for *my* time of life –and I think a lot of older people are up earlier in the morning –now, they’re in bed earlier at night too (says with a smile)”

Like Laura, Australia enjoys the idea of exercising in a pleasant environment. An example of how the exercise instructor can influence the exercise environment (and thus influence the exerciser’s experience) comes from the first day that Amy, the YMCA instructor, came to work with the group and brought her usual exercise music.

“Amy came because somebody felt that we could use *new* exercises, because they’d been doing the same ones for ten years, or even longer! –and of course, I hadn’t ... and Amy’s very “**Alright!**”. The first time she came, and she put on her um, *music* and we thought we’d go bizar –go berserk -this *terrible*, you know, beep bop music going while we’re trying to exercise and of course, we’d rather have Beethoven if we had to have some music... *anyway*, I thought ... this wasn’t going to work, because she’d be in to the next one, where as with Linda, she’d say “Now girls, *rest*. Everybody take a **deep** breath!”, while Amy’s like “**Okay!**” so, the next time she came ... she *didn’t* put the music on (laughs). I think it was *hard* for her, because she relied on the beat of the music to start the next exercise, but um...uh, I’ve come to *see* that it’s *really* beneficial, because she –she has about 7 or 8 different exercises that will do the same thing and she’ll give you one this time and ... one another time.”

Australia feels that as an initiate one is bound to question the effectiveness of what the leader is instructing them to do, because one has yet to experience the results.

“I’d say –you know, when you start out on something, there’re always um... things that uh... you wonder if this is doing any good, but you –you go along, because ... yeah, pretty much, I’d say. I’m just grateful for doing the things that I’m doing and seeing results. If you didn’t –if you sort of felt, “Oh! You’re not working hard enough”... sometimes I think “Oh! That nearly killed me! Why do we have to do two lots of this?” (laughs)”

Long Term Absences

Australia has been fortunate enough that in the time that she has been attending her classes, none of her classmates have passed away. She has observed, however, that many people have had to take time off due to illness or surgical procedures, and others have chosen to take time off for traveling and other events, but they always come back.

“People have been *ill*. There’ve been a lot of people off for *surgery*, um... the one –she won’t know the class when she gets back- she’s gone to Mexico for three months and she’s taken her *ball* –and we got into these *bands* before she left, but *now* we’ve done *so much* more (says with a laugh), but uh... -this is the one that is like a little minute... and uh... so, people are *away* –she’s not away for her *health*, but a couple of people *have* had uh, surgery and been quite ill... uh, and –and gone away for other reasons –a *wedding* or something for –in a couple of weeks, so ... you know, you –but nobody -nobody’s *died* that I’ve met yet.

They've *all* –uh, *one* came back shortly, but I think she's gone to Florida or somewhere now so... she had... *some* kind of internal surgery and I think she wasn't able to exercise for quite a while. She came back and did a few *moderate* little things and then was whisked off to sunshine."

Though she sees her classmates disappearing and reappearing for various reasons, it has not reduced her desire to continue attending because she does not want to miss her class.

"You just sort of say "Oh... well, I'm going to be..." you know, "I'll be here and I don't want to miss" and "Oh, are we going to be here on Boxing Day?" you know, and "Oh yes! 365 days!" and then you hear "Nobody's going to come on New Year's mor... Day", or whatever –anyway... uh, it just makes you feel that you should *come* and as I said, when I knew we were going to go to Jamaica, I thought, "*Oh!* What am I going to do?". Well, I thought I can *get* a band and I thought "I'm not gonna get a ball and blow it up"... but I sort of thought, well *some* of the things, you know you –that one where you put your foot on the ball and I thought –you know, you can *pretend* you've got a ball under your leg and –and do it that way... and uh, my husband and I went to Boston for a couple of days and I missed a class, and I remember then, doing some of the things as if I was weight lifting and trying to, you know –so, it's *on* your mind when you don't –I *don't* like to *miss*. I have that feeling of "Ooh, I'm losing ground!" *that* kind of feeling, *so*... I mean, I *know* if something bad happens, you... uh, you're going to miss or if you have a holiday and you *miss*, um –I had to miss because my granddaughter stayed over night... and I think, uh... nobody's ever said, "Oh! Mum *must* have her exercise! Dad..." and I just... felt... my husband hides when she's –was a *bit* difficult and I didn't want him to –I mean, I should have just said [taps her fingers on the table] "You're on this morning!" (laughs). A few times, when our *grandson* has been on and he *loves* –he's *old* enough and so uh, he *knows* that I'm off to my class and he's getting Drew his breakfast and taking him to school, so that works out."

Being Female

"I don't know if we're more *open* to –to going to things... um... I don't know if being female has a lot to do with it –that's hard for me to answer... I mean, I *am*... uh... the only way I can sort of look at it is that my *husband* is uh... he's 8 years older than I am and he's always been a swimmer, but I –I try to picture *him* doing what I'm doing in a group of *men* ... and I don't know if they *would*. I don't know if this is a *female* thing where you "Come on girls, let's get going", kind of thing... (I: mhmhm) I don't *know* that. In the same way, it's always puzzled me that, you know, men love to garden and if ever you go to a garden *show*, we went once to –the Hamilton Royal Botanicals ...um, and I sat back and look and I would see: here are the teachers after church, you know, all the lady teachers "*oh!*" looking at all the things. Here's a little family. Here are Mum and Dad. Here are two *gay men*, uh... and here are husband and wife... but you *never* saw – why don't you see a group of men say "Come on, Bill! There's a gardening show!"? They *don't* get together –they go to the Blue Jays... but, they don't –so, I think it must be a sort of an *easier* female thing to do what *we're* doing in our group (I: mhmhm)... I *think*. I think it *is* more socially acceptable, I *think*. Maybe it's just part of the way we're –yeah, the way we're... kind of *brought up*... I –I think so. You don't see uh, women who like

sport ever calling, saying “Come on girls! We’ll all go off to the football game!” –or maybe you do when you’re *younger*! Maybe you *do*!

Need Salience

In Life In General

Competence

In life in general, Australia feels most confident in her abilities to care for other people, such as her family members and the individuals who are involved in her community volunteer work, and in household matters such as cooking.

“In com –community volunteering, I *suppose*. (coughs) They’re the things that make my life interesting. Um... I look after my grandchildren, which I enjoy, a couple of days a week and it’ll be March break for the older boy um... so I enjoy *that* um... I’ve always enjoyed cooking... um... I teach literacy and I really enjoy that –I have a student and uh, I think she’s wonderful and she thinks I’m wonderful, which is terrific! I have a little student at school through Big Brothers and um... little brothers... um –it’s a *mentoring* program –an in school thing *and* a little Indian girl and *again*, that’s wonderful... um... yeah... confident, you know... and house –always household things a-go. I mean, I enjoy cooking –always *have, walking... yah.*”

Autonomy

Though she feels that many of her decisions and activities are dependent upon her husband, Australia is not resentful or unhappy because she feels that compromise is integral to a long term committed relationship. In household areas of her life, such as managing the kitchen and social engagements, she feels quite in charge.

“Well, I guess I’m in charge of the... *kitchen* (says laughing) if *that’s* something ... and I think *most* women are also sort of in charge of the *social* engagements –you know, “Let’s have Bill and Mary for dinner” –that kind of thing. Or... although my husband’s the one who’ll say “Come on, we’ll go out for dinner tonight” and uh... I know when he wasn’t feeling well, he’d say “Let’s-” you know, a couple of times –we went out a couple of times in a *row*, which... we really never do because uh... you know, a lot of the restaurants you go to, unless you want to go somewhere really, really fancy... you go to get what you could make yourself and it’s probably not good for you, somewhere else, you know *those* things.

I suppose in *most* ways I am [in charge of my decisions and behaviours], um... I mean, if I said to my husband “I want to go to Australia tomorrow”, he’d probably say “Yes”, but I’d be thinking um... you know, no matter whether it’s this time that he’s not well or I’d be thinking “I won’t ask that”, do you know what I mean? Or –or um... you know, and some –some –my husband’s never been the one to sort of say “*Go to so-and-so, take the*” –you know, he *likes* being looked after. So, um... you know –it’s not that I *haven’t* done some of those things, but probably I’d have –I’d have done *more*, but do I resent that? *No*. You know, I’m happy uh, doing what I’m doing.”

While Australia practiced as a nurse in her home country, she decided to end her medical career and become a full time housewife when she moved to Canada, which left her completely financially dependent upon her husband.

“I didn’t have much of a pay cheque throughout my married life. I did funny little things sometimes –worked for the March of Dimes for a while and because I was a nurse in Australia –when I *came* here... I could have taken a couple of courses and *everything* would have been the same and I’d have been a registered nurse, but I married Prince Charming and I had this –this beautiful *child* and did I want to go? –I didn’t! And I *should* have, and –and, by the time I was ready to... look for a job I –things had changed and I really would have had to go back to school again to start *all over* again –the nursing. Because, you know, things have changed *a lot*. Uh, in *my* day, you know, “Here’s the bed pan. This is how you *scrub* it”, whereas *today* –I mean, nothing would be *scrubbed* today

Now that Australia is older and wiser, she feels that she has developed a more assertive, independent personality and lifestyle and that it is a natural progression for women of her generation because of the development of women’s rights throughout their lifetime. While she enjoys her newly found assertive side, she doesn’t feel that she needs to be in charge of decisions all of the time.

“There are, uh... *um*... well, if you’re meeting and somebody decides we’re all going to do *this*, well, you just go ahead and do it... I mean... *um*... sometimes there might be things that I uh... I think –I think ... I *should* say, *as* you get older... you do get more assertive. Now, *you’re* from a different generation and I think [taps her finger on the table] because *young* women today have their own job, and they just say “I’m not going to do that!” –they’ve got their own money. If they want to go and spend ... \$50 on lipstick, they can do it... *um*, whereas I came from a time –well, my kids said to me once, uh –a long time ago, they said, “You mean you have to ask *Dad* if you need –*Dad* brings you money, if you want money?” (laughs) and uh... I said “Well, *yes!*” –you know. I mean –but *now*, of course it isn’t like that. I’ve *got* my own bank account (says with a laugh) and I’m... *so*, *um*... but, *um*... I –you *do* become a bit more assertive as you get older, but I don’t think that’s related to *exercising*. I think that’s related to *aging*. You *don’t* have all these little children’s wishes to come before you own... and *um* –it’s something that happens to women, I think... uh... when they get into their 50s, I would say... in *my* generation –perhaps it won’t be in *yours*, because you’re always looking... now, there are certain people who will be walked over all their lives, but *um*... yeah, I think it –I think it’s part of *um*... I don’t know... maybe, *feminism*, whatever it is... you uh... and you *certainly* get **fed up** with things on television. The *portrayal* of women on television and in the newspapers, and that... *really* is upsetting and –you know, inappropriate *dress* and comments about what Hilary Clinton is wearing and ... yah [with Obama] they’d just say “Nice suit and a nice colour tie ... oh and he sticks to white shirts!” –*well*, you know, somehow that’s ... anyway. It’ll go on forever, *that*, I think.

Relatedness

In life in general, Australia feels meaningfully connected to the people she meets through her community work, but she feels that one of her most special connections is with her grandchildren.

“Very special with my grandchildren, I think... uh, you know *really* uh... you know, people say to me –oh you know, “you’ve made such a difference in their lives” and uh, “and their lucky to have *you*”, but I’ve always said ... we’re lucky to have *them*, because they live in Niagara Falls and my grandson, *all* last year I picked him up at school everyday... we’d go... exploring along the creek... you know, a lot of that sort of thing that probably a lot of children don’t get because your daycare doesn’t take you to ... climb a tree and you know, so... and that was good for *me too*! To be out... and uh, so that –and now he’s at school full *time* and now my *daughter’s* child has started to come two days a week, so, uh... you know, *that* is –I mean, it’s *very* rewarding and you know that you *are* having a good influence –and the children that go to daycare, they get *lots* of things, but they don’t get the *love* that they get from a grandparent.”

In Exercise

Competence

Though she feels very confident in her ability to exercise and tackle exercise-related challenges at this stage in her development, Australia had felt much less confident when she first started attending the class at the YMCA. What she thought other people were thinking of *her* played a large role in this feeling.

“You sort of feel... that everybody’s thinking “Oh, my gosh! ... She’s not very – not catching onto this very well”. I mean, you kind of have that feeling, while nobody ever *said* anything like that and they probably *weren’t* thinking that at *all*... and often they would say: “Gosh! You’re really –you know, up to that!” and I know, the other day when we had Amy, at the very end she was doing some yoga things and she said, “Now *this* one... *oh* this one’s for the core. Now let’s just see if we can do this” and *I could do it!* Along with some of –and some *couldn’t*, and I thought [taps her finger vigorously on the table] (laughs) ... some might be a couple of years older than me, but uh, we’re all *about* the same age, I think.”

Autonomy

Though Australia feels that she is not in charge of her health, because she feels that isn’t entirely within her power, she feels highly in charge of her decision to exercise. One exception would be if her doctor was to intervene, she would feel obligated to follow his orders.

“Well, I’m in *complete* charge, aren’t I? I mean, if I wanted to *stop*, I could... *I’m* the one –I mean, my doctor, you know, if my doctor said “Do this or that”... I’d have to do whatever the doctor *said*, but um, *no*, I’m in charge. Can you think of anybody else

who *should* be? My *health*! You, know, my health –I mean, am I in charge of my health? No, well... that –you –you know, you just *don't know*. If something happened to me, it might be that I *couldn't do* what I'm doing, and then I'd cry! (laughs)"

"I *did* go to the 3 lb weights and I found that my fingers were getting –my *thumbs* were getting sore and I've had my *knee* –had been sore, and I get um a *newsletter*. The um, what's it called? –the Mayo Clinic Newsletter, and they talk about osteoarthritis and one of the first things –you know, it happens on the *same* side of your body and I... thought "Ooh, I'm going to my doctor tomorrow!". So, I *stopped* –I went down to the 2 lb weights –back to the 2lb weights and I *stayed* at those... and uh... they still ache a bit, but I just felt I didn't want to go to the doctor and have them say, "What a fool *you were*! Why didn't you stop?" I'm hoping he doesn't say something like "well, you should be doing" –I don't think –I mean, I know you –*with* arthritis, you *still* exercise... things, but... so, whether this came on because of the... starting a new program or not, I don't know... or whether that's exacerbated, I don't know."

With regards to the types of exercise she does and how she does it, Australia recognizes that in a class setting the instructor is in charge of guiding the class and thus designs most of the elements of the program, but she does not feel obligated to do exactly what the instructor says, though she tries to because she wants to.

"You *can* really just say "Just do this. Do as much as you can. Do as may sit-ups as you can" - sort of thing. If something I'm doing is really tiresome –and I noticed this morning with the legs –my thighs, *that's* what I noticed was *really* hard. You know, we do this thing where you have a *ball* –do you do that? And you *catch it* with your legs and then you put your legs down and up when you're lying down and ... *that* [demonstrates the movement] and you do two sets of ten of *those* and then you put your legs up and one down and I could *feel* my thighs just *screaming* this morning and so I –I cheated a bit *then*. But *that* -all the time you're sort of *conscious* of *that* –you know, I don't sort of say, "Uh! To heck with *that*! I'm only going to do three of *those*!" and there probably *are* people who do that. There are some who go "Oh, I've got my... whatever-it-is that's *bad* and I won't be..." you know, and they just don't *do*... whatever it is, because they've got a bad shoulder or something, you know, they're seniors, so... I *try*. I try to push myself. Now, *sometimes* you'll notice –like I told you, this morning was really hard- and um... some of the things I'm sort of ... you know, maybe do ... every *other* one (says with a chuckle)... kind of things... and I just thought "Well, you know, I haven't done anything in such a *long* time" and *being* –you know, I think *being* so sick and then just lying around, not doing much –now, I did a lot of laundry yesterday and a lot of running around but... that doesn't make up for all those other days, you know?"

With regards to appearance, Australia believes that women should have the right to dress as they want to, but that they should conform to certain standards of appropriateness.

"I noticed today a young girl –she's about *your* age and I saw her there the other day. Now, she's obviously been away for holidays; she's got a beautiful *tan*. She's got little spaghetti straps, and the midriff, and short-shorts and off she is jogging around the track! And I think... "Now, women should have the freedom to wear what they *like*..."

but... why would you think that *appropriate*?" You know, when *most* people are there in their baggies ... you know?"

As she does in life in general, Australia does not feel that she needs to be in charge of all decisions pertaining to her own exercise experience, but that most of these decisions are made by her because there isn't anyone checking in on her, monitoring her progress. In the class setting, however, she feels that she want not be involved in the decision making because the group should make any big decisions together.

"If I'm going somewhere walking and someone says, 'Well, come one, let's go *this* way'—sure, I'll do that. Yah! I'm thrilled to do it ... and you know, I go with my husband, you know, he doesn't walk *fast*—as I do... *and* um, sometimes maybe he'll say, 'Well, I'll come with you today'. Well, you know, we go out for an amp- and he'll hope we'll see someone and have a little chat. Well, that isn't a *walk* for me, but you know, there are times—sometimes I'll just *do* that and then *maybe* I'll go out again—or maybe I've already *been* out... but not always. Sometimes I'll sort of say 'Well, today it's a day... for that'—especially when he's not well. So, uh... so, yes, it's *not* um—it's just that, I mean, I can't depend upon my friends to call and say 'Now, don't forget to miss your class—don't forget your class tomorrow [corrects herself].' I mean... that's not what it's about, is it? ... That might be in *high school*, when someone's in danger of dropping out, or whatever ... but, uh... *no*... I—I don't—I can't *see* that you'd ever give it over to som—there's *nobody* in my life who says 'Hey! You haven't been for your walk today!' or 'You haven't—You've missed your class!' ... no one would really *notice*, you know.

Now I *know* when um... the other day one of the uh, people in our class said uh... "You know, um... there's a chance that we could do some *yoga* tomorrow and Amy said that she'd do *yoga* if nobody minded", and I remember thinking "*Well!* I don't know about *that!*"...you know -now, I *know* yoga isn't *just*... I mean, I've seen it on tele—so, I know it's *active* ... and I remember thinking, "Gosh, you know, I don't know if I would like that"... but the day *came* and uh... nothing was said and Amy said, "Oh yes, but we'll do our exercise and then we'll do 15 minutes", so... *perfect* result. You know -I knew I would go with the flow and then when Amy said we'll do our exercise *first*, and *then* the yoga, I knew "Well, it's going to be fun!"—and it *was*."

Though she does not want to let her group down by not attending, she does not feel entirely obligated to show up if she can not and thus does not feel controlled by her sense of devotion to the group.

"I think you feel in charge, I mean our class is such a -it's not like being on a basketball team, that if you decided not to go, your team mightn't be able to *play*, or—you know, a team player that's going to *really* affect the team. I mean, you *go* because you're the group you know, when you *can*. If you're *sick*, you know—and they're all *sorry* to hear that I'd been sick on Friday"

Relatedness

With regards to exercise, Australia feels meaningfully connected to all of her classmates, and especially to her friend Lonna whom she knows outside of the exercise environment.

While she feels a loose connection to the staff members of the YMCA, she does not feel the same meaningful connection to them as she does to her classmates.

“Well, I guess my *class* and you know, probably my friend Lonna because I see her *outside* the class as well. So, uh... probably uh... I mean, I feel connected to *all* the people in my class. Uh... do I feel connected to the person... at the desk of the Y? In a very *loose* kind of way, I mean this *young lady*, young woman, *here* ... in the coffee bar - now, I mean -Yes, I’ll be connected if I don’t go for coffee -you know, I been *twice* I think -today was the second... um... not *good*, um... you know, *loose* connection, but uh... you know, you feel connected to your -people in your class I guess and *mostly* to my friend”

When she first started exercising, she did not feel the same connection to her classmates as she does now. Rather, she feels that connection has strengthened over time.

“That comes through, uh, through *experience* and uh, through... -yeah (I: yeah) yeah (I: okay). They *grow* on you... like *any* class, right?”

Need Values/Importance

In Relation To Herself as a Person

In relation to who she is as a person, Australia feels that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are all equally important, though initially she had placed autonomy below relatedness and competence because she thought it made her sound like a “control freak” [A: 944], much like how Laura had associated a negative stigma with the concept of ‘being in charge of one’s decisions and behaviours’. Also similar to Laura, Australia feels that people are “nothing” without meaningful connections to others and that one cannot function optimally without confidence. Though she had temporarily moved competence below relatedness, she was steadfast in her decision that relatedness was of primary importance to her.

“*Well*, I don’t think ... this one makes -sounds as if you’re a *control* freak and I’ve *never* seen myself as *that*! I mean, sometimes I just -you know, when you’re a mother in a family, many times you’re thinking, “It doesn’t matter about *me*” -you know, it’s what’s important for family happiness -that kind of thing but um... if you don’t have *confidence* in your abilities, um, you really can’t function very well and if you don’t have meaningful connections to other people, what *are* you? *Nothing*!”

After discussing what it means to be ‘in charge of your decisions and behaviours’, she was able to conceive of how autonomy relates to motivation.

“Yes, well it *is* important to be in charge of yourself, because if you’re *not* and you leave other people in charge -or if you’re *not* in charge of yourself, you get *nothing* done.”

In The Eyes of Society

In relation to how society or the world values the three needs, relatedness was once again anchored in first while autonomy and competence shifted in order. In the end, however, Australia's final decision was that all three were indeed equally important in the eyes of society at large; the same response as Laura.

"All I can *see* is... meaningful connections to others as *helping* one another, and you just *see* the uh, the differences in society –the *rich* and the *poor*, and ... I don't know if you saw that 20/20 thing last night on television –I mean, it was just the most *appalling* thing. This... *man* who... doesn't seem to be rich, but has an ability to –to *get* help from other people and he goes to foreign countries and he takes *doctors* and *nurses* and medical supplies to give medical attention where it's needed ... and he realized it was *needed* in the United States, so he has these *weekends* where people drive up and he had... you know, *500 people* sleep the night! Some of them –some of them sleep the night in their *trucks* and things –there are sick people who can't afford medical attention *in* ... some place in the US, coming to see *nurses* and *doctors* and *dentists* and teeth pulled and... people who'd had um... –*cancer* surgery – a woman who'd had cervical cancer and she hadn't had a check up for *two years*. *All* of these things because they can't *afford* their dental care... even –you know, well a truck driver –you'd think *today*, a truck driver earns quite a bit of money, but it's because they've got *no*... it was *captivating* – just the most terrible thing. So, if you *don't* have that –you don't *care* about other people –all you care about is getting yourself up *here* [motions with her hands to represent 'climbing the ladder of success and prosperity'] [taps finger on table] what kind of world are you going to have? ... Okay... let's put them all together! [taps her finger on the table and moves the cards]... because you've got to *teach* somebody to... –to fish, not just give them fish. They've got to have confidence in their abilities –I guess it's the same."

As an Exerciser

As an exerciser, Australia was very sure of how the three needs varied in importance to her and placed autonomy first, competence second, and relatedness third. Though relatedness was a primary importance to her as a person, as an exerciser she feels it is a source of motivation, but the least important because she believes that she would still be motivated to exercise even if she did not have meaningful connections in her exercise environment. Autonomy she placed in first because she feels it is important for her to exercise, and thus being in charge of the decision to do so is of primary importance. Competence is something that she feels is developed by regular attendance and being able to work through challenges.

"Well it... (chuckles) being an *exerciser*, having a meaningful connection to others, to *me*, as an *exerciser*, I don't think that makes much difference ... I mean... as an exerciser, meaning *in* your exercise class and the people you meet exercising? Yeah...yeah, so that's not as important. I mean, if I went and uh, didn't really ... *care* that much for the people in my class, I think I'd still *go*... unless, you know, they were really obnoxious. Then I probably wouldn't go [taps her finger on the table]... I would go even if my friend quit the class... and even if um... other people *changed* and moved around and died, I would still *go*... um... you sort of think, "Oh!" you know, "Oh! So-

and-so isn't here today" –well, I mean, really I suppose Lonna is really the only one because she's been my *friend*, we talk on the phone. We've done, we've gone to a feminist group together, we do things together, so... it's *more* than just the exercise class –that's sort of a *bonus* that you see one another three mornings a week. Not for very *long* ... and not to *talk* much, but it ups the relationship.

Being in control of my decisions and behaviours ... um... [taps her finger on the table] well, *part* of that is being in control of whether you would *go* or not, isn't it? ... and it's important for me to be there –and um, well, *just* making the decision to *go*.

Confidence in your abilities –I mean, that *comes* with *going* to the class! If you don't –if you don't go to the class, you're not going to –you know, because when you miss a few... I mean, when I was going this morning and I missed *Friday* and being *sick* and done nothing all weekend, I thought... I might be very –you know, "I hope I can keep up!" or "I hope I can get through this" –get *through* it, I think. You don't think "I hope I'm not the worst *there*", you don't think *that*. When I went and had to go out and buy these *short* things to wear –and I never wear *shorts* because I've got *scars* all over my legs... –and they're *fat*! Um... so, um... getting over *that* hurdle and going to my first class and um... *seeing* how –you know, I never had times when I was so... um... *distressed* afterwards that I couldn't carry on. No *terrible* aches and pains that you thought, "*Oh!* My gosh!" –nothing... and it just got better all along."

Though autonomy stands as the most important need for her *now*, when she first began, Australia would have placed them all in a different order with competence being first, because at that time her confidence in her ability to exercise was very low. She would have placed relatedness second because knowing her friend was going to be there helped her feel better about the program choice itself, leaving autonomy in third.

"Um... when I *first* exercised... um... well, I guess I worried about... the con – *yes*, I would *think* probably *that* [referring to Competence] was the most impor –*worry* –worry I had... was that I uh... *mightn't* be able, uh –that I *mightn't* be very good at it and... wouldn't be able to keep up –even though I *knew* everyone was around my age... and when you know it's been going on for ten –or is it *twenty* years? ...

Probably, if my friend had said "well, you know there is this *class* that I've seen people going to..." I *might* have said, "... *oh*, I should look into that". I *might* have said, "I *will* look into that" and have done it, *but*... when I knew it was *her* and she was *going*, you know you *know* that you've got a recommendation and that she'll *be* there and you know that... you're going to like it."

Well-Being and Exercise

Though Australia considers her mental well-being to be "Excellent!" in general, she is unable to describe her mental well-being while exercising because she feels that it is not something she thinks about while exercising; she is too focussed on her exercises. She does not view this focus as a distraction mechanism, however, but rather like entering a different world.

"When I'm exercising? *Mental* well-being? Um... well... you know, um –I remember thinking once, this uh –one thing about it –you never have time to think about

your *problems* because you're *so* concentrating on "Oh, is *that* one coming next?" or – you know, *moving* your legs and uh, that sort of –you know, *moving* and –and doing it... so, what's your *mental* ... thing there? It's just *concentration* really. You don't have *time* to think, "What'll I have for supper tonight?"... I don't know that I'd call it a *distraction*, I think it's a ... it –it's ... *in* and of itself it's like reading a book –*is that* a *distraction*? ... [thinks about her question] Well, *yes*, it *could* be distracting from your problems, but *really* what you're doing is *entering* into a special, new little world, or a special world that you have *longed* to get into all day, or –you know, you *know* it's coming up and you just... –you know, want to get into it as soon as you *can*. *That* kind of thing ... so *really*, no, I wouldn't call it a *distraction*, it's just –as I say, um... a wonderful experience ahead of you."

Though she does not recall how her mental well-being is affected during exercise, she does recognize that she feels tired and frustrated at times, this was especially true when she first started the program, because she was not confident in her ability to keep up with everyone else in the exercises.

"Now, I guess you feel *tired* and you think, "Oh no! Now we've got *this* awful one!" and... *but* ... you know that it's... it's like –you *know* it's good for you and you *know* you're getting better at it. There's one thing that you do –I mean, where you lie down on your floor –on the floor –on the ball ... and you lift up one *arm* and one *leg* and then on the opposite side and ... uh, -oh, no! [corrects herself] You keep your feet on the floor and you lift up the opposite leg –well, *I* thought they had *both* legs off the floor and I had forever fallen –I mean, I must have done it two or three times before I realize that you keep one foot *on* the floor! No wonder I couldn't do it! *So*, um... I think probably, when I *first* began, I would think –you know, "I'll never get this!" or um, "Everybody can do this, and I *can't*!"... (coughs) but *now* I've got the confidence of –of having done it – even though they've done it for ten *years*, I've done it for long enough that I *know* where I *am*... and when we're trying something *new* with Amy, I'm not afraid that ... I *might* think "Ooh, can I do this?" or "Is this going to be really hard?", but I *don't* think "I mightn't be able to do this, but everybody else will", I don't feel that at *all*.

At first you sort of think, "Oh! Everybody's *sore* that I fell off" or I didn't –or [corrects herself] I *lost* my balance, but *now* –you know, I've [taps finger on table] –you know, and I think "Well, poor Linda's lost her ball or I hear somebody go, "*Oh!*" – I think "Poor so-and-so", but you know, you don't have time to think "Oh, is that little Jan going by?" because if you do, you fall off. So, um... not *really*, you um –it's just like being in another little world, there. Um... if it was *less intense*, *perhaps* you *would* notice these other distractions, perhaps you'd have time to think, "I've had a bad day at home and now I" or "I had a bad day yesterday, and now I'm having a bad day today", I –but I think you're so... *caught up* in the whole thing because it's... you know, it's **hard**"

Need Thwarting

Competence

Australia feels that on a day when she is feeling very good mentally, it would not bother her if her exercise performance was not as strong as usual. This is because she would

attribute her poor performance to a “reason” such as having been ill, or taken time off otherwise. If there was no reason, she would simply reassure herself that she will do better the next time.

“I suppose you’d find a reason –of course my exercise group, remember, starts at the *beginning* of my day, so I get up –I haven’t *got* much of a day to say, “Oh, this is a wonderful day!” Um... uh... *today* ... I –I was really *sweating* and uh... and at times got *tired* and *muscle* ache and I *knew* it was because I’d been unable to do very much [because of having been ill]. So, you sort of think uh... “Darn this! But there’s a *reason*”... and if you’ve *missed* a class and you think, “Oh, this isn’t going as well today” you have a *reason*. So... I don’t think I’ve *found* that *because* I’m worried about something, the class isn’t going well. I don’t think I’ve seen that correlation. I might *one* day, I don’t know.

If I *really* did badly that day um ... I’d probably go, “Oh! You had a bad day, but you’ll do better tomorrow –next time”. I don’t think I’d feel, “*Oh!* Well, better pack it in! *That* wasn’t very good”. (I: so it’s not going to ruin your day) *No!* (I: okay) Oh *no*. (I: Alright) There are too many other wonderful things you... you just have to look out the window and realize there’s more to than self-indulgence. *Part* of this, in a way, is self-indulgent, I suppose... but um... you gotta be healthy!”

When she first started exercising, she would have felt embarrassed if her performance was not good. Since then she has come to realize, however, that it is okay to make mistakes because everyone is just there to improve and challenge themselves together, not to compete against each other.

“Well, I think because I was the –you know, the *newest* in the class, I just kind of –you feel *bad* at the time and you sort of think, “Oh!” Everybody’s thinking what a ... clumsy clock you are... but um, you sort of realize through the *friendship* that you *feel* in the class ... that um, everybody just wishes the *best* for you and they’re –and... *mostly* you’re so concentrating on what you’re doing yourself, you don’t feel critical of others and so you *get* this feeling that ... other people just want you to do *well*. They’re not trying to *beat* you, even though you see your friend with a 5 lb weight! (says with a chuckle) or when you’re told to pick one weight and you look around everybody’s got two! So, eventually you use *two* (says with a chuckle) uh... but you still, –you know, so I –I –I think then, maybe you might feel a bit embarrassed... but, um... you have to –you know, you *stop* that because you realize you’re all there for a good cause and it doesn’t matter.”

Autonomy

When thinking about the time that yoga was introduced to the class, Australia feels that even if Amy had decided to do *only* yoga that day (instead of their regular routine) she wouldn’t have been pleased, but it wouldn’t have made her upset enough to ruin her day. She does feel, however, that in a class setting big decisions should be made with the consideration of each participant’s wishes.

"In retrospect I *know* -I guess I kind of *told* myself it would be alright because I've *seen* some yoga and it's got such a *following* that I *know* it's not just -you know, crossing your legs and -you know, it's very *intensive* so... uh, part of me said um... "Paulette should have gone to the yoga class". What she said was, "I've always thought of going to the yoga class, but unfortunately I *never* made it!" and Amy said -and I remember thinking, "That isn't *right*! That isn't what you *do* when you're... in a *class*" you know, you have to be more democratic than that. You -you go to the yoga class yourself *or* you have a vote or something, but I -life's too short to get upset about things like that, so it wouldn't have upset me *really*. As I've already told you, that's all that went through my mind, but would it ruin my day, whatever? No. No, no, no."

Likewise, though she hates missing class, if her husband is unwilling to care for their granddaughter while she attends class (and thus must stay at home), she does not feel that it would upset her.

"I've told you my husband will look over my little grandson ... if he stays over and um... that means that -that had meant that if he was going to the Y that he wouldn't be able to *go* that morning ... *and* -I mean, I just didn't give that a second *thought*. I just, you know, it's my *class* and I *pay* for it and I'm *going* and so -you know, uh... and so, do you know I'm kind of *assertive* [taps her finger on the table] about that?! Now, as I've told there've been times when I *haven't* been because it's my granddaughter that stayed the night and I don't like to fob her off, because she's not... easily fobable, but getting *better*, but um, *anyway* um... so... you know, I don't think -I don't think it would upset me."

Relatedness

Though relatedness was the least important need for Australia as an exerciser, she does feel that experiencing a lack of meaningful connection to others can temporarily affect her enjoyment in the exercise experience, but the feeling does not linger because she knows that she still has a friend and that she will see them next time. Particularly if she feels adversely connected to an individual who unwelcomingly denotes themselves as the exercise leader for the day. In this case, Australia is less inclined to follow directions because she prefers to hand over autonomy to people whom she respects and feels are competent at the task.

"They can affect you a *little* bit. You know, sometimes I *go*, uh, and maybe my friend isn't *there* and, I mean, you know, it's like having a dear friend anyway -you really, you *miss* it... *and* oh, you know, you go in and you know that she's not -it looks like she's not *coming* and you get there, but that only lasts for the first ... *minutes* and then you're too busy with your exercising to *notice* - to really *care* about anything else, *although*, you know, you might "Oh! I really meant to ask so-and-so... and now I'm going to have to phone" -*maybe that*, but they're momentary and um... it's just like going into a garden and one flower isn't out yet, or something -you know? Still -you've still got a *friend* Uh, sometimes I come and um... *maybe* there aren't many people there... and the ones that -I mean, you always have people in the class that you like better than others... we -and *some* are really likable, um... *one* who's been away *a lot*, isn't so

likeable... she's a bit –you know, we always –I always think of her like one of those [says while laughing so hard the words are inaudible] –a *German* woman in a prison (still laughing) –you know, the women in charge of that. Somebody once said that (says with a chuckle), um... and you might feel “Hmmmm!”, you know, because *she* would take over some of the class at a certain time, uh, and there's one woman who's really *lovely* and outgiving and *she* has done some of the class work um... *so*, um... I remember there was a *time* this one I've told you about and *another* one were there, and *immediately* this prison-one *took* over! And ... I sort of thought “Well, there are *three* of us” and I really wasn't keen on what she was doing and so some of the things I just *did* ... my own way and the way that we'd been *taught*... and I didn't listen to her saying “Well, you know, it's *crazy* that we always do *this* because *this* is the better thing!” of course, you know, some people are very knowledgeable because they've seen it all on... TV or they've learned it all –*anyway*, so I did feel... annoyed then, I remember, and I did my own thing to begin with and *then* I joined in and did what they were doing, you know, sort of *part* way through when I –I guess I –I was *over* it (laughs) and uh, maybe they were on to something that I was... you know, that I felt that I could do again.”

When Australia first started exercising, it was a similar experience. Though she would look for the people she felt connected to (such as Lonna) it wouldn't ruin her experience if they did not show up, because the important thing for her was that *she* was there. Furthermore, the group does not do a lot of get-together/bonding activities outside of class, so the level of connection she feels to them is limited and thus the impact is less dramatic in her eyes.

“Um... they weren't influential so that you'd say, well if your friends are not there you won't go, I mean, you'd never do *that*... um... I remember thinking, “Gosh!” you know, “Where are those two?” because those two would walk in –you know, Lonna and her friend, and of course –you know, everybody has a time when they're at their *cottage* and then something *bad* happens and they miss again and again and I thought, “Gosh! Imagine paying *all* that money and they're not here again!” (says with a laugh) but uh... as I say, you get *right* into it and you –you *don't* –you know, the *important* thing is that *you're* there. *You're* the one who if you're *not* there, 'cause you're all going to have a cup of tea, *nobody's* stays for coffee or anything afterwards ... it's just um –you know, *so*... I don't think that's really *changed*... um... you know, you –it's –it's not as if you're there for the *whole* day. I mean, they *have* had a get together. *Perhaps*... and also *my* having to –usually I have a deadline –like today I had this deadline [referring to the interview], Wednesday I'll have Maggie, Friday I'll have Maggie, so I'll be... –*hoping* she [referring to the exercise leader] doesn't go after ten to- and racing off, so... you know, we don't have that uh, there's not a lot of... hanging around *talking* which is what *builds* up the group and so, you know, I wouldn't say in the mix of everything, that I've developed such a ... *feeling* for them all that I really feel *sad* if they're not there um... or that uh, that it would really affect... my day ... and *them* either... you know.”

Today

Competence

Before coming in to the YMCA on the day of the interview, Australia felt very capable in her life in general, but cautions that exercise is virtually the first thing she does in the day so there is not a lot of time to encounter situations that may impact her need satisfaction. In reflecting upon the last 5 months she notes that she did not feel as confident prior to beginning her exercise when she first started and feels that the competence she has developed over time has improved her feelings of confidence prior to exercising now.

“When I came in the earlier days I kind of thought, “*Oh!*” you know “Will I be able to do it today?” and uh, you know, “What’s the secret of that thing with the feet!” (laughs) Um...but um, you know it’s probably changed *there*, because I *am* more capable... in doing those exercises... um... but –so *that’s* the difference, perhaps. You just sort of think, “Here I am!” and “Off I go again!” ... “Is there snow? No!”

During and after her exercise program, on the day of the interview, she recalls feeling a similar sense of accomplishment and well-being that she feels when she overcomes a challenge or does a ‘good deed’.

“I guess *mastering* the things that you set out to do, yes, and I remember doing this *horrible* one I told you about, and uh... um... I know I was able to do the *first* set without ... you know, doing anything *too* terrible, and the next one I could do about three or four more with [taps finger on table] both feet down and maybe missing one and so I felt you know, that feeling of accomplishment then.

I think you get the sort of a bit of fe- feeling of *euphoria*, you know that kind of *thing* that *any* exercise, any *good* walk, any ... I don’t know if you could say, good *deed* or *accomplishment* gives you. You know, you feel... *great* –you know. Now, then you drop your ... *milk* on the floor! And that quickly dissipates the feeling of goodwill (says with a chuckle), but uh, you know. It *does*. It does give you a feeling of uh, well-being. Yah.”

Autonomy

Before coming to class on the day of the interview, Australia felt generally in charge but was worried about her husband’s health, which she is not in control of and which has a large impact on her own life. To relieve some of that psychological stress, she tries to be organized and plan ahead so that she will not be burdened with worry while she is away.

“I couldn’t really think of anything that I –that I felt I *wasn’t* in charge of *except* of my husband’s health. You know, he’s got some *tests* to be done. He’s been this, um... *sickness* that he had, it was hard on him and on me, and uh... so, you -you kind of have a bit of a worry there and you’re *not* in charge of what’s going to happen with tests and things, so –you know, there’s certainly a worry *there*, but um –you know, you try and... take care of the things you have to take *care* of. So, yesterday when I got my things [taps finger on table] -got my cards lined up *yesterday* I knew today when I got up, “I’m off to

class, I'll be seeing Meghan, and shopping, and ..." and I didn't worry then about my husband's *health* because I thought about that the day before."

During her exercise class, she did feel in charge. Afterwards, however, she was curious as to what exactly the interview would entail, because she did not feel as though she was 'in charge' of the proceedings.

"Today? Um... well, I felt in charge there. You know, I felt that I was uh, in charge of doing, or not doing, the *full* exercises there and uh, if my legs were aching then I just uh... you know, *fake* it a bit (says with a laugh) with my feet in the air and hope Linda was looking the other way! Uh, not *really*, she wouldn't care. But, uh... you know, then there was coming to meet you and wondering what was *ahead* and knowing that I *wasn't* going to be in charge, right? *You're* in charge of the interview, but "What could possibly take *an hour and a half?!*" (laughs)"

Relatedness

While Australia did feel connected before coming in to the YMCA on the day of the interview, she believes that she feels a greater sense of meaningful connection to others when she is able to come into contact with them, like when she came to her exercise class that day. She feels that exercising in an environment where she comes into contact with the people she feels meaningfully connected to is more motivating than exercising at home to the television.

"It's when you *meet* people –well, I mean, my husband's at home, of course I'm connected to him. Um... and when you come in and you do see the people you *know* –I mean there's the person at the *desk* and she says, "Oh, you know, I passed your message along" and then I said "I *know* the name was wrong" you know, so right away I realized that she *does* know that I'm Australia –'cause she's known my husband for years. I mean, he's been coming here for years and years and years –and then, you know, you see the same "Oh! We're sorry you were sick!". So, you *do* have that connection, you know, that sort of thing.

You know, you see someone –you just see them changing at the Y –you know, "Good morning" and the same lady at the... the thing –you know, you see that yes, there's certainly lots of connection when you're –you know, if you're in front of the television you don't have that connection. You *do* have a connection, yes, by coming to class –definitely... and is it *important*? *Well*, I'm *not* at home doing it in front of my TV *because* I don't think I'd keep it up. It's *better* for me to do it this way, I do recognize that."

4: Reflective Maintainer: Simba

Participant Characteristics

Simba is a 75 year old regular exerciser with a BMI of 27.1. She typically expends 2950 kcal of energy each week on physical activity, with the majority of her energy expenditure occurring through mild and vigorous physical activity during her leisure time and in work around the house. Though she started her exercise program 6.5 years ago, she

experienced a shoulder injury in the summer forcing her to take 6 months off. Though she has only been back to her regular routine for approximately 6 weeks, she felt that the definition “I currently exercise regularly and have been doing so for **more than 6 months**” was the most accurate description of her situation because of the 6 years of commitment she had prior to her absence. As a member of the YMCA, she participates in the Aqua Fit classes and also pursues walking and stretching exercises.

Why/Reasons & Motives

After the birth of her second child, Simba encountered back problems which she treated by following a yoga program on her television. Before divorcing her husband and moving into a house of her own in a new town 19 years ago, Simba enjoyed swimming and doing some exercise at a local pool. After moving, however, she did not have access to the same facilities and was too busy working a bed and breakfast to commit to a structured exercise program. It was a combination of the influence of her daughter’s enrolment at the YMCA, and her longing to swim again that triggered her decision to start back approximately 6 years ago after retiring from her job.

“I decided to -my daughter came here, ah, and, ah ... so it seemed like a good idea. When I lived in Niagara-on-the-Lake I used to exercise at the Prince of Whales -I used to go and swim every night and I used to do some exercises and stuff there -and that was fun. That was great. But I **missed it!** I missed it terribly when I was in Queenston -I’d swim in the -in the *summer*, at the pool in St. David’s, but um, it closes in September, so that’s when I decided to come to the Y.”

While her initial reasons for taking up yoga (a solution to her back problem) as a young mother reflect a more identified form of exercise regulation, she began her swimming activities in later life for more intrinsic, as it was something that was “fun” and enjoyable for her. Now, as a regular exerciser in a formal exercise program, Simba continues to be guided by more internalized forms of regulation. Aside from the sensation of feeling good physically, she also feels that the human interaction she receives during her time at the YMCA is another reason for why she exercises and does not feel that either reason is more important than the other, rather they are both important in their own way.

“[I exercise] because it makes me feel so much better. I really enjoy it... I like coming to the Y, I like seeing pe - I need to get out and see people too. That’s very important. There’s a saying that you should see at least three con -human contacts a day, and when you’re retired, sometimes you don’t -and it uh, it’s important. You realize that, I think, on holidays. It just... time drags, because you’re not doing the usual things.”

“It’s hard to put a, you know, to say one is more important than the other ... one’s emotionally ha -good and the other’s physically good. They go together.”

In discussing *who* motivates her in her exercise behaviour, Simba's initial response was a straight forward "me", though she does appreciate the encouragement she feels as an exerciser in a group setting. She also claims that she does not readily reap motivation from the media, such as television advertisements, but she does concede that people other than herself may have an *indirect* influence on her motivation. For instance, a peer of hers at the YMCA (who has since moved into a retirement home) whom she regards highly as an important role model in the aging process in general.

"Oh, *indirectly* probably ... um ... well, there are people that, you know you -well I can think of one lady, now she's ... I think she's probably about 85, but she's just abso -she came to the Y a few times last year. She's moved now to Toronto and she's not -she's living in a -in a home because her back, you know, she's 85 - she's getting older. And, but she's just so *straight* and so marvelous and so cheerful and just, you know, a real role model. And, uh, I just -you know, people like *that* motivate you."

"Well, I think today it's -it's -an aw -an awful lot of people *do* exercise -you're not *alone* doing it ... and so you're encouraged"

"I wouldn't watch anything *anyway* that was trying to motivate me on TV. It would be a commercial and I'd turn -I turn the sound off all the time anyway to mute them"

While her children are supportive of her decision to exercise, she believes that she is more likely to be the one to try and actively motivate them instead of the reverse. Her daughter's exercise behaviour does evidently motivate Simba, perhaps indirectly, as it was her involvement that triggered Simba to join and Simba is now considering transferring her membership to a different organization so that she can exercise at the same place as her daughter. Her doctors are neither supportive nor unsupportive, but indifferent towards her exercise behaviour even though it appears to be helping in her recovery from her shoulder injury and surgery.

"Actually when I had my shoulders -I keep telling them I do this and they're not even interested. I know, they don't have time ... or something. I don't know."

"The kids do. I suppose they certainly, yah ... th -they -they're pleased that I do stuff, but ... they're busy with their own lives. They're not -they're not rushing around saying "Mum, you've got to go out and get exercise", right? I'm more likely to tell them!"

Though she feels that *she* is the most influential person in her exercise behaviour, her friends are the most influential individuals with respect to her motivation in her life in general. More so than her children and grandchildren because they are closer to her age, can empathize and understand the experiences she is encountering now at this stage in her life, and she sees them more frequently.

“Well, my friends ... probably. Because I like them and see them. I think if -if they care about you, you know –you know, they’re pleased to see that you’re doing something and they’ll encourage you in doing something that might be helpful. They’re more my age. They’re more -more at my experience and I see them more often. My grandchildren, much as I love them, I don’t think they’ve got much to tell me! (laughs) I mean I’d like to keep well and everything else for *them* but –but they’re awfully sweet. We go for a walk –we, we go for walks with the kids and, you know, Thanksgiving and stuff like that –the whole *gang* goes and Luke comes along and holds my hand –helps me over things -thinks that I’m - I’m old and decrepit. (giggles)”

Like Laura, Simba finds the YMCA establishment helpful in her motivation, though more for overcoming barriers related to time and convenience rather than isolation and change of scenery. This is understandable given that Simba is a younger older adult.

“It’s great encouragement to have a place like the Y, here and then there are other –there’s all kinds of them all over the place. Even if –if the Y’s a little bit far away from you there’s all kinds of places, that you, you just have to – any little town has got some kind of “shape up and .. stuff”. There’s far too much of it –you know, being too -overweight and stuff.”

Being and Becoming an Exerciser in Older Adulthood

Identity

Simba has enjoyed her experience as an exerciser in older adulthood. Though she always enjoyed being active growing up with swimming, hiking, and cycling as common pastimes, she never considered herself to be an ‘exerciser’. Rather, she claims her activity was simply for recreation or a necessary part of her life. While raising her children, before entering the hospitality industry, Simba found it difficult to fit physical activity into her lifestyle because she worked as a school teacher. She did end up becoming responsible for walking the family dogs, however, which was a duty she was happy to undertake. Thus, her activity during mid life was both a) out of necessity and b) because she enjoyed it. Over most of her lifetime, she feels that her ‘exercise’ was simply part of normal living because “you’re not setting out to exercise. You’re just –you know, ordinary living is exercising”.

“It’s been great! ... I’m sure it’s improved the quality of life very much. I’m quite sure it has... because, yeah, it just *does* – because you need to be active, and when you’re active you feel better.”

“Yeah, well I don’t –never would have considered myself an exerciser... I used to just walk just to enjoy it. You know –well, you’re busy all day anyway –‘cause I was teaching. I was a teacher, so I was busy. Now, I didn’t –when you’re *standing* all day and rushing around and you’ve got two kids at home and two dogs and I used to walk the dogs, of course ... ‘cause everybody else is *supposed* to walk the

dogs when you're getting them for the *kids* (laughs), but *you* end up doing it... anyway, I *enjoyed* walking them"

Being Female

Though she grew up in a leisurely active family, 'exercising' was not a common practice when Simba was growing up because "it just wasn't that imp –that important... yep. People didn't *know* about how important exercising was". While her father was fit and active, it would have shocked her to see her mother partaking in physical activity. She speculates that it may have been related to the culture in Canada at the time, because she had a very athletically minded Aunt living in England. Today, as an older adult in Canada, she feels as though it is less unusual for women to be active and exercising.

"My dad was always fit ... and he swam. Oh, not –not competitively or anything. Just because we were up at the lake and that's what you did! And ... no, nobody ever *exercised*, in the –you know, exercise –like going to –you didn't *go* to gyms and Y's. And my father was always very fit –never overweight or anything... so ... not an exercising family, although –I mean, my *sisters* –I have three sisters –and they're all, well, we were all pretty active in school.... in whatever, you know, field days we had and stuff like that, you know –basketball ... One sister was a real champion, she –my older sister, but she was –she's very competitive."

"I've always –when I was younger I guess I bicycled around a bit. **Not** serious bicycling –not like you guys do today ... When I think of my mother, she never did *anything*. And uh –uh- we –we would have been astonished if she did! It's interesting, you know?"

"That may have just been in Canada, because I was astounded when I went to England and I was, well, in my early twenties and my Aunt, who was ... oh I guess Cookie -Aunt Cookie was probably 40, 40, she must have been 45 or something like that anyway –maybe even 50. I was absolutely *astonished* because she played *tennis* all the time (chuckles). She was really uh, came from a very *active*, athletic family, and she loved her tennis."

"*Today* you can be female, you can be male, you can do all these things ... it might have been [a draw back] years *ago*. I mean it's just –just because, uh, for instance –back to my mother again –she never exercised. But it was ... it –it would have been completely, it –it was very accepted then. She wasn't expected to. Whereas perhaps it would be less unusual for a man ... you know –to –not be involved in exercise of some kind."

Time and Effort

Even as a maintaining exerciser, Simba still finds it difficult to motivate her self on some days, but she is always glad that she has gone even if she was not feeling up to it initially. One tactic that has helped her overcome barriers associated with time and living

outside of the city is planning ahead and taking advantage of the trip into town. By choosing to exercise in the late morning, most of her morning is free to take care of chores around the house and then when she is finished exercising, she makes the most of her drive into the city by running other errands. Furthermore, in terms of how much time she dedicates to exercise, though she feels as though she could just come for the Aqua Fit classes, she *wants* to do more and thus has incorporated walking and stretching into her regular exercise routine at the YMCA because she “loves” it.

“I –I –I ... don’t *always* want to rush off in the morning and come here. But I – I try and make myself... and I’m *always* very glad I did, you know, when you do. But, I’ve arranged it so that it’s not –I can get a lot of things done in the morning and then when I get here –I’m downtown here, I can do a bit of shopping. It all works out quite nicely.

“Well, I could just come for the Aqua Fit, but I *want* to come more. I want to do the walking. I think it’s nice to have a warm up and I –I believe in walking. I think –I have varicose veins and it’s important to walk and um ... and then I –I –I need to do my yoga stretches. I *love* to do that ... and I, you know –no, I guess I am increasing it because I want to. Nobody’s told me to do all that at all. I just decided to do it.”

While eager to spend extra *time* exercising, Simba is more cautious in terms of *effort*. She recognizes that, as an older adult, she is better off leading a life of “moderation” and balance, because pushing herself too hard could leave her with an undesirable result such as injury. As such, it does not bother her that she is not pushing her limits. Rather, she is content with the level of intensity she works at.

“Well, I’m moderate in everything (says with a smile). I could put more effort in. I *could* put more effort in. I could push myself, but I don’t see much point. I –I –I like what I’m doing and I don’t want to ... –I think you have to be a little bit gentle with yourself when you’re this age, uh, you know ... you push yourself too much and you’re going to run into trouble.”

Need Salience

In Life in General

Competence

Though Simba had been an art teacher and claims to be confident in her abilities within the family and household spheres of her life, she feels most confident in her life in general when she is leading a healthy, balanced lifestyle, incorporating regular exercise and healthy eating habits. It is interesting to note that she does not feel confident in her artistic abilities, despite having completed a career in art education.

“Well I was an art teacher ... so um, and now I’ve –since I’ve given up bed and breakfast everything, I’ve actually been able to do some stuff myself. Now, I’m

not very confident there! Oh, no, I need to learn an awful -I've never *done* enough to get really -good enough, but that's par for the course. You're never good enough when you, when you do -you know, when you're an artist. Something better's always gotta ... be the next thing, yeah.

"Well, I feel most confident when I'm *physically* well and ... and emotiona -nice and even, not stressed."

Autonomy

Being separated from her husband leaves Simba feeling almost completely in charge of her own decisions and behaviours in life in general. While she recognizes others can have an impact on her decisions and behaviours, she feels as though her experiences in adult life have taught her that she is not required to do anything she is not inclined to do.

"I *am*, totally... almost totally. I mean, I'm certainly influenced by others that I'm responsible for ... and uh, *that* makes a difference, but uh ... no, I'm in charge. Nobody is uh, managing *me*. I make *all* my decisions myself. Well, I'm separated (laughs), *that's* why. It's great. Now, it may be the wrong thing totally, but still ... you know, it's *yours*, anyway. You don't have to argue and try and persuade somebody to your point of view, which is a good thing for me."

"I don't feel *vulnerable* ... to others ... pushing me around and telling me what to do. I don't -I don't think, uh, at -at my age I've learned that, you know, I just don't have to do it! I'm not a little kid anymore. You become confident because you've learned so much more... and you keep on, you know -it's amazing, the wo -how much you've learned in all these years. I wish I could go back and have the physique of a -when I was 21 and the strength and the ... and everything, but I don't want to forget all the stuff I've learned. 'Cause that -that's very important."

When it comes to sharing the decision making, Simba is happy to do so if the individuals in question are helping her and welcomes other peoples' perspectives. An example from her life in general would be when she was renovating her house. Ultimately, she was the person in charge of making any final decisions, but she invited her friends to contribute their ideas.

"I don't *mind* other people making certain decisions and *helping* me with decisions. In the end, it's going to be *me* that decides, but I'll certainly welcome help of all kinds -sure. I love other people's ideas and ... everything, it's great! When I was changing a lot of things to my house uh ... I loved to get ideas from everybody and then I'd just choose, you know, then *I* decided what -what's going to work best for me and -and uh, that's good. It worked out well, anyway."

Relatedness

Simba feels meaningfully connected to the people in her life that share similar interests and are involved in the activities that she engages in. For example: her family and friends in art. She feels, however, that she should not allow herself to become dependent upon her family for her social life because she feels that they need her to be self-sufficient.

“Well, I certainly feel a very strong connection with family; very much so... and with my work, I mean, I love – I go to art classes and stuff and -and I just *love* it. I get along beautifully with everybody because we all have the same interests and we –y – we’re all sort of the same types. I’m sure you would find the same thing with people who are interested in sports and exercise and all that stuff. You’ve all got something to talk about.”

“You don’t want to –you don’t want to involve your family too much. You can’t ... no, you can’t, uh - it’s a fine line there... you can’t use *them* for your ... social life. I don’t really want to ... but, uh, you know, yeah, it’s –we’re very close. I have wonderful girls and I’m in touch with them all the time, but I don’t live with them. I’m not going to do *that*. They need me to be independent.

In Exercise

Competence

At this stage in her exercise adoption/maintenance, Simba feels confident in her ability to perform the exercises she sets out to do.

“Right now, I’m good! (chuckles)”

Autonomy

Simba feels very much in charge of her decision to exercise as well as in choosing the types of exercise she engages in. She recognizes that the exercise leader does have a substantial amount of control over the decision making during the class, but does not feel required to follow the instructor at all times. Instead, she chooses to listen to her body. This is a particularly important practice to her, given the potential complications associated with her shoulder injury/surgery. Furthermore, she believes that the enjoyment of a class does depend partially on the quality of the leader’s instruction, because they can be a valuable support by “keeping you motivated and keeping you going” during challenging workouts, but sometimes the experience can just be “poor”.

“Well, there’s ... it’s totally up to *me*. If I want to stay home and stay in bed all day, I can do that. But I don’t want to. So, it’s up to me to decide.”

“I can be encouraged by some good teacher or something that, uh, you know, I -it depends on who we have in Aqua Fit. It could be a good workout, or it can be just ... poor.”

“I believe very much in –you learn this in yoga –you, you uh, listen to your body and you *don’t* push yourself. I mean, with my shoulder, I’ve had to exercise –well, first with just small little movements, ten times a day ... and uh, then gradually working up to it... and uh, it’s, ah- ah – ah- it was a pain to do it, really, to try and remember, you know, ten times a day. It really ... structures your day too much, but um, it was worth every minute of it because now my arm is strong.”

In the context of exercise, Simba is also happy to hand over decision making if she trusts that the person in question is educated in the task at hand. If she does not feel confident in their leadership, however, she simply would not follow their guidance.

“Oh, I don’t mind at all. If -if I feel they know what they’re doing. But if I don’t ... well that’s alright, because I won’t do it.”

Relatedness

With regards to meaningful connections in her exercise experience, Simba feels particularly connected to two of her peers, though she does not actually exercise with either of the women. She considers them both to be very good friends and admires them greatly as role models.

“Yah, I have two friends and one of them’s a yoga teacher ... and she’s a very, very good friend of mine. She’s in [the States] right now, she just moved out there. Oh she’s been gone -I went out with her about 10 years ago, but uh, yeah, she’s –she’s great... and then I have another friend who, unfortunately, is going around with a walker right now, but... um, she’s a great exerci –she’s quite amazing. She’s done ...well, she’s just been into sports and games all her life and she just loves it. She pushes herself far too much, which –she’s been cycling around and doing everything and she’s a year older than I am and she can’t do it right now. She did one last thing with her kids, which was quite marvelous. She went climbing a mountain out West and uh, had it named after her they thought she was quite wonderful”

“They’re role models and *friends*, yeah. Yes, we talk about things –and it’s inspiring to hear about what *they* have done sometimes”

Though it is a different kind of relationship and connection, Simba also enjoys the camaraderie of her classmates through Aqua Fit. She feels that these connections develop gradually over time and that she considers them to be friends even though she may never learn their last names or meet up with them outside of the exercise setting. Having been a regular exerciser for some time now, she has also seen many of these classmates come and go, typically for health reasons, but finds inspiration in those who still adhere well into advanced old age.

“Oh! I like to see some of [my Aqua Fit classmates] yeah, it’s great –it’s nice. You know, it takes a while, but you get to be friends after a while, you see them - you notice when they’re not there. The odd thing is –it’s rather a sad thing... uh,

over the years there've been people that I've really... -were quite fun and um, but they just don't come back and you realize ... I don't know... -you don't usually know their last name or anything so you're not in touch with them, but this one lady I did contact, and uh -she'd had a heart attack and ... you know, and others go off and they're into ... they're into homes, and so... it is sad. But you don't, - but there's some that are just marvelous and just keep coming and keep coming and they're in their 80s and... it's amazing."

Need Value

In Relation To Herself as a Person

As a person in general, Simba feels that being meaningfully connected to others is more important than feeling competent or autonomous, because people instinctively "need" to be social. She feels that the other two are also important, but that they are more easily satisfied because they are typically within the control of the person in question, whereas an authentically meaningful connection is, in her view, highly dependent upon a second party.

"Just because ... I think, we are social people, we need to have these connections, I - I am anyway! I *need* to, -to -to -I'm very lucky in my family... that I have all the connections. It's enormously important to me. I think it's probably the most important thing. I could stand ... yeah, it's most important, definitely -I would think. The other two are important -sure! But, um ... you can do something about the confidence in your abilities... and you can do something about being in control of things, but uh ... *that* you, you just *need* to have. It -it's -you can't - well you *can*... -you can rush out and *try* to make friends and stuff, but if you don't *click* with anybody, or you're just sort of left sitting on the shelf, that's pretty sad."

In The Eyes of Society

Simba feels that the way society *should* value the three needs differs from the way society *does* value them. She believes that people as a whole should place relatedness in first, but that in reality being in charge is of primary importance because society is very "me" focussed. She also believes that when people feel like they are not in control (especially of other people), that it fosters fear.

"Well, I think meaningful conne ... - I think the -the -people like being in control far too much here. Yeah, everybody wants to be in control of everything. Well, I think it *should* be more meaningful connection with others, but I don't think it *is* (long pause)... I think it, uh, I think the being in control bit, is more the way the world works -the way our society works."

"Well, being in control is probably 1 [1: Autonomy], and ... and confidence would be number 2 [2: Competence] and meaningful connection would be number 3 [3: Relatedness], because um ... it's so much 'me, me, me', society... and that -

that sorta cuts out meaningful connections, sometimes. So, I don't know if that's *right* or not, but maybe that's probably a pretty *bleak* look on ... our society. (laughs) It's probably not all that bad (laughs)."

"Oh, well, they get problems like ... racism and ... all kinds of stuff like that, and ... most people being sort of scared or not liking something that's not ... like *them* -that they *don't know* about, so they're not in *control* of them... and they feel very -and that -that creates all kinds of ... stuff."

As an Exerciser

As an exerciser, Simba feels that confidence in her abilities is the most important of the three needs because a lack of confidence acts, in her view, as a protective mechanism in that a person is less likely to push themselves too far if they are not confident in their ability to complete a given task. Furthermore, though meaningful connections are of primary importance to her as a person, they are "not so important" to her in her exercise experience because even in a group setting, it is still an individual activity.

"I think, um ... maybe ... maybe confidence in your abilities [1: Competence], because then you're not going to try to do things that you can't do ... and being in control [2: Autonomy] ... and meaningful connections to others [3: Relatedness] - that's not so important when you're exercising because it's just *you* that's doing the exercise. In a group setting ... yeah, you're still doing it on your own. You're not -you're not working -you're not working as a team. If you're working as a *team*, that's different."

Connecting the Needs to Motivation

Simba feels that there is a relationship between the three needs, particularly between competence and autonomy. Not only because she feels that a person needs to feel confident in their abilities in order to feel truly in charge of their decisions and behaviours, but because she was the one in charge of overcoming challenges related to low motivation and she succeeded, that experience has helped to increase her competence in exercise. She agrees that some people may choose to engage in exercise in order to fulfill these needs, but like the initiate exercisers, she feels that meaningful connections to others are generally a bonus.

"Ah, well, they *all* relate to each other. If you have confidence in your abilities, then you're going to make more meaningful connections with others, and then you're going to be more in control. So, they -they relate, certainly. And the other way, if you're in control, then you've got confidence, obviously, well - I don't know. This *control* business, I don't like control freaks (both laugh), but if you're in control of *your* decisions ... uh, being in charge, is -is -is uh, important... and you have to have confidence to be in charge.

"I feel good about myself if I have uh, been in control and I've decided that I'm going to go and do it, and I do it even though I may not ... -be the first thing that I think of, I think of a few excuses and other things that I have to do, but no, to think that I have done it, and done it consistently over a period of time too, not just, you know... done it for a month and then quit ... and I think that gives you more confidence too, in -in ah ... you feel that you *can* do it, you know... and then the -this is just a little side effect -the meaningful connections to others -you meet other people."

"You want to make *some* connections, because you're not just isolated ... and alone. Uh ... uh, you'd want to develop confidence in your abilities by exercising ... and then you -the more confidence you have, the more control you have over everything else, so there you go"

Well-Being and Exercise

In general, Simba describes her mental well-being as "pretty good".

"Well, I mean, everybody has their ups and downs, but ... I'm not ... in a depressive state very much."

Similar to the response by Australia, from the initiate group, mental well-being is not something that Simba makes a conscious effort to observe while exercising, but she supposes that she is happy. She was more certain about how pleased she feels *after* exercising, both physically and mentally.

"I guess I'm fine. I don't think about it -I'm fine, quite happy. Afterwards, I feel good. I usually feel a little better. You feel a little bit taller, a little bit cleaner, a little bit -just better. It's not *euphoric* or anything like that, quite. But it's just -you feel quite fine and *glad* that you did it -it's all been worth while"

Need Thwarting

Competence

If on a mentally good day Simba were to perform her exercise to a lesser standard than usual, it would not impede upon her psychological well being because she is not competing with anyone and the exercise she engages in is not highly complex. Like the initiates expressed, some days will be better than others.

"Doesn't bother me at all, because I have *no* technique! I just *do* my exercise, you know, and there's nothing challenging -very challenging about it. I'm not -I'm not playing *tennis*, I'm not trying to *win*, I'm not trying to do anything, I'm not trying to learn to dive or anything like that. I'm just walking around, stretching, and swim -and doing what I'm told in the exercise class, but another, you know -some days are a little better than others, it's *not* a big deal."

Autonomy

Similarly, if on a mentally good day she did not experience the same degree of control, or being 'in charge', of her exercise as she is accustomed to, it would not be problematic for her because the exercise itself is something she is happy to follow along with.

"It's just not important ... I mean, uh, the -the exercising is just ... it's not *work*. It's not something I'm *pushing* at. It's something I'm just doing, and I enjoy it."

Relatedness

Though she placed relatedness in third place of importance with regards to herself as an exerciser, Simba admits that she "would be a little disappointed" if her exercise friends did not show up, but that it ultimately it would not bring her down.

"That's ... not -not uh, not going to make any difference really. So, I mean, there's disappointments in life (says with a laugh)."

Today

Before Class

Though she did experience some degree of accomplishment that morning, Simba did not feel overly capable in general before coming into the YMCA on the day of the interview, due to her inability to hook up the technical equipment required to for her new cable service.

"Do you want to know for sure? I -I -very *incapable*, because I just got, uh ... I got a package from Cogeco for -for digital TV and -and I've got all these things lined up and I've got to try and figure out how to put the damn thing together (said with a laugh) and I don't know how to do it. Mind you, I did get a few things accomplished, and I thought: "well, I'll take the cabinet *first* and get *that* organized" and that's going to take some work... and then I'd finally decided that I'm going to phone the digital people and told them to come out here and do it. I'm tech -technical things, what you call that kind of stuff, it's not easy. My son-in-law would do it, but he -he's away for a while and I don't want to -my neighbour, I don't want to ask him ... because he does -you know, he's got his own stuff to do too now, so *there* I am! I wasn't very -very ... -very capable. I was about to leave *it all!*"

Though feeling less competent than she would have liked to be, she had the freedom to make the decision to leave it and thus her sense of autonomy was not impacted.

"Well, I was fine -I could *leave* it! (laughs) *I* decided to leave it."

Living on her own and not having interacted with anyone that morning, she did not encounter any direct experiences of meaningful connection to others.

“Well, there was nobody to feel connected *to*! (says with a laugh) Um... well, I ... I—I live on my own, so ... and I don’t even have my cat anymore. Poor old thing got a lung tumor and had to be put down last year. It was very sad—but anyway, um ... I wasn’t talking to anybody about anything particularly”

During Class

During her exercise on the day of the interview, she felt quite tired while walking and she speculates that it might be attributable to her not having exercised in almost a week due to holiday closures and poor winter weather. During her less strenuous activities (stretching and Aqua Fit), she felt better physically and was happy to be able to socialize with her friend who had returned from vacation, as well as her friends up on the walking track.

“Well, when I’m walking around, I get really quite tired, actually. Mind you, I haven’t done any -much walking since ... Friday. I mean, I’m up and around, but it was icy and it was cold and all that stuff and then there was the holiday – there was nothing open [referring to Family Day, February 18th]. So um ... no, I get quite tired and my feet hurt, and everything else, but I just keep on going... and – and then by the time I get to my yoga stretches, I’m quite happy. I like doing that and then uh, it’s kinda nice to be in the water and do all that stuff, and it’s fun to talk to ... -Karen’s back, um, she was in ... Barbados... for a while, and yeah, so that’s nice ... and it’s uh, just nice to hear –see some of the people that you know. Have a -just say ‘hello’ really.”

“Oh sure! In class I do [feel connected to others], yeah... and then there’s a couple people upstairs that I’ve got to know that are, you know ... walk together sometimes –sometimes don’t. Yeah... so there’s a couple of people that I ... they’re there sometimes, sometimes they’re *not*. But it’s always nice to see them.”

“Yeah, you’re in charge too. Yeah, exercise will do it all for you”

5: Reflective Maintainer: Mike

Participant Characteristics

Mike is an 80 year old regular exerciser with a BMI of 30.1. She typically expends 4968 kcal of energy each week on physical activity, with the majority of her energy expenditure occurring through mild physical activity doing work around the house. Though she first started walking for exercise in 1984 at the age of 56, Mike experienced a fall, as well as a stroke, 7 years ago and then a second fall in 2006 which prevented her from being able to exercise until January of 2007 when she started up at the YMCA. As such, she had been exercising for 13 months at the time of the interview and obtains her exercise by walking on the indoor track, doing resistance training and stretching exercises.

Why

Now, as a reflective maintainer, Mike primarily exercises because living with a proactive approach to aging has become a part of who she is and because the exercise itself makes her feel happy and “feels good”. Re-establishing herself as an exerciser was something she felt she *needed* to do for herself as a person. Together, these motives reflect the most highly internalized forms of exercise regulation: integrated and intrinsic. As part of living a proactive lifestyle, Mike is motivated by her desire to maintain her functional independence so that she does not become a burden to her children, which is important to her, reflecting identified regulation. Of all the reasons she provided, “feeling good” was the most important to her. When she first began exercising, it was to keep up with her husband, who was pursuing walking as rehabilitation after his second heart bypass surgery, acting as an exercise buddy for him so that he would be successful in returning to good health. This suggests that she was primarily motivated through identified regulation as an initiate.

“So that I *can* -that I don’t become ... a cripple! ... if that’s the word... personally, because I *feel* better... then it uh, reflects right through the whole of your life... you go around with a better attitude, nobody gets mad at ya... people think you’re ... happy, and you *are*! The more I do, the better I feel. -Happier... my *outlook* ... I’m not going around lookin’ *mad*... um... I think the whole thing is -is when you get your blood moving... it creates a good feeling.”

“I *don’t* want to be one of these *old* people who... don’t do anything and they - you’re a *chore* for your kids. I’m not gonna be that way; neither one of us. We’re gonna be... *goin’*. -That’s why I won’t give up my car. I’m gonna drive ‘til I drop! (chuckles) and do other things yah... it’s -I’ve seen too many families where... the *kids* -their life is *ruled* by their parents, because they need so much help... and I’m not gonna be that way”

“When my husband had his uh, first hea- he’s had two heart bypasses, by the way, and of course his uh, rehab was *walking* and I had to keep up with him, so... to keep *him* going to begin with... and it became a way of life... Then when I fell and uh, I couldn’t do it for a little while, I was very unhappy. Mhmmm... and it reflected in other parts of my life and very soon people realized I just wasn’t the way that I *should* be. I *missed* not being able to exercise, realizing that... I was losing some part of *myself*... and that was what was bothering me most.”

In thinking about *who* motivates her to exercise, Mike is confident that she has always been the one person responsible for her exercise motivation. Though her husband is a source of motivation *while* they are walking, she is typically the one to remind *him* that they are going to be exercising. She feels that exercising together has been beneficial for them as a couple because it gives them “something to talk about” and allows them to meet new people. Generally speaking, she finds the social and physical environments of the YMCA to be uplifting, as the staff members are very positive and helpful, the place is

always clean, and it has a presence of positive energy because it is always busy with people of all ages.

“Me... just me (chuckles), because I’m the one that says to Bob, “Don’t forget, we’re going walking today!” and uh, make sure that *his* bag is packed for –you know, so that he doesn’t have an excuse *not* to... although I think *he’s* motivated. He feels good about it... he still *golfs* ... he can hit a *ball*... playing baseball or whatever, and he’s almost 83, so... and he’s had –he’s had *two* heart bypasses. Yah.

“I don’t think anybody else really has, it’s... things that –*thoughts* that go through your own head that you get off your rear end and get moving. That’s about it. Yah...”

“One thing is –I have to keep up with my husband... he’s a walker and uh... so this helps motivate me too.

“Well it’s *good*. For one thing, it gives us something to *talk* about. We meet other people –we’ve met some *very* nice people. We only see them here, but we quite enjoy their company while we’re... after our walks we might sit for half an hour and chat and uh, I just think this place is fabulous. It is so *clean*... the people here are so *helpful* and *cheerful*, it’s a great place to *be*... and you just have to be around here to see the mobs coming in and out. Oh, all those *children*! Oh, aren’t they adorable? (laughs)”

Though her doctor was not a direct influence in her exercise initiation, he did help her through a phase of restlessness in her life that triggered her to be more mindful of her activity levels (or inactivity levels). Like Brandy, she wanted to avoid taking medication and thus treated her insomnia by obtaining a day job.

“The *only* thing was... when we first moved to Toronto in 1965... um, I found I couldn’t sleep. I was just awake all the time, I was –and my husband got so annoyed with me. Finally, I went to see a doctor –he insisted... and he was going to put me on Valium and I said, “I don’t want to take drugs or anything like that. *Why* am I not sleeping?”. He said, “Your brain hasn’t –you haven’t given your brain enough activity”... “*Oh*, I hadn’t thought of *that*”... and he started asking me questions and it was about ... everybody was gone to school and gone to work and there I was with the dog and the cat... and nothing else to do and... I was *bored*. Yeah, so “How am I gonna stop being bored? Get a job!” and that’s what I did. I got a *job*... and it worked for the next twenty years and ... there I had motivation on a lot of things and I suppose that basically has... influenced me to *know* what I’m doing. I mean... *don’t* get bored”

In her life in general, Mike feels that one of her biggest influences is simply seeing other people. Not only for the social aspect of it, but because, like Laura, she wants keep up with the times and be in touch with the modern world. She also feels that seeing her peers is an influence on her motivation in general.

“Just *seeing* other people... and wanting to be ... *interesting*. Not... *hibernating* and ... keeping up with things.”

“You know, you see somebody wearing something new and you think, “Oh gee, *that’s nice!*”. So that puts you in the mood to go out and *shop*, that sort of thing. Yes, there are many things that influence you... very many.”

Being and Becoming an Exerciser in Older Adulthood

Mike started walking for exercise when her husband was prescribed walking as therapy after his heart surgery, but since then has had to take time off on several occasions due to her own injuries and illnesses. The weather also played a large role in Mike’s exercise behaviour until her niece’s husband presented her with a trial membership to the YMCA (a venue where she could walk safely indoors during the winter months). Like Laura, Mike was immediately impressed by the facilities.

“Well, uh... I had been walking up North the summer before I signed up here at the Y... we came home in the fall... and the weather turned and I couldn’t get out walkin’... and a niece of ours uh, gave us a –a little card as a... a –[trial membership] to come and check the place out... I walked in and as soon as –I *just* came in the door... in the lobby, I knew we were going to be *here*. I signed up that day for the membership and I wouldn’t give it up. Yes, [the trial membership was important] because it got me to *come* here and check the place out. I didn’t use it that first day, but I knew I was going to and that’s why I signed up. My husband was all “Well, well, well, *you know*”. I said “You can come if you want, you don’t need to” (laughs) but uh, I knew *I* was going to do it.”

“*Well*, when I fell and broke my arm, that was a *real* ... *year* of trauma for me... and then I realized, “Hey! I gotta do somethin’” and ... that was when Fate stepped in and my niece gave me the card to come to this place and here I’ve been started back... I’m not back *yet*, I’ve a way to go... but I’m trying!”

“I’m so glad! I *knew* this place was here, but I hadn’t been near it... and we’d just moved back from Toronto... in 2006, and so uh, it takes a little bit to get used to it all again. Mhmmm. –Like we were both *born* here. Yah, but we lived in Toronto for 43 years with my husband’s job and then I got a job there too and worked, yah... so, yep...”

“This place ... I had the inclinations and the –the *wanting* to do... thank goodness I had the *area* that I could come to. ‘Cause if –if I didn’t have *this*, where would I be? You can’t walk outside in the winter... at least *I* can’t ... not -not to *walk* the way I want to. So, if I didn’t have this place, I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Physically, as a re-established adherer, Mike is enjoying the benefits of regular exercise. She is feeling better mentally and is experiencing less pain than when she first

started back and, like Rae, Mike feels that joining the Y has been helpful, socially, in her transition in moving to the area from Toronto.

“Good! Very good. Uh... I don’t have as much... *pain*... in my *bones* as I did... um, that alone would keep me going... to get rid of *that*. I do have the odd time, um, but I have massages –my daughter gave me uh, one of these automatic massage things for Christmas... and I use *it* most days too. Just up and down my back, which certainly *helps*... and uh... it just feels *great*. Yah.”

“*Mentally*, my whole attitude has changed. One thing is helping with another... coming here has made me realize that I want to lose some –some weight... um, health-wise I brought my uh... high blood pressure down ... *fantastically* –there *again* is a good point! And uh... so the whole thing is like a big circle... one thing helps with another and eventually everything helps ... at least that’s what *I’m* seeing.”

“*Well*, the only thing I can say about that is: I was used to *walking* at Variety Village in Toronto... uh... up until just before we moved and then of course uh, I wasn’t up to doing much all that summer and fall... and by the New Year, my arm was feeling much better and ... I just felt I had to get moving and that started me again. Yah. It’s been quite a ... -after 43 years away, it’s quite a thing to move back here and get into the swing of uh -how things *are* and... meet some people –everybody you used to know, you wouldn’t know them again if you saw them... and uh, so it’s been a real *change*.”

“Other than our daughter and her husband, and a niece and her husband, we really have ... not that many people that we *know*... there is –there are family, but we’ve been away for so long that ... the connection is just not there and I’m trying to build it up again so... you know, getting back –‘cause, we have *nieces* and nephews and they’re all married and they’ve all got kids and everything... but, they have a life and we were not a part of it for all those years –other than the odd weekend if we came home... and uh, so it’s been ... it’s been a real, *real* experience ... and the other thing is finding your way around the town because it has *changed* so much!

Being Female

Mike believes that being female has played a role in her exercise experience, as the gains she is achieving (particularly weight loss) are helping her to achieve her ideal body weight. She finds this desirable because she feels that females generally want to look good in their clothes and appear younger than they are.

“*Yes*... it *does*. Because you want to look good... you want to be able to... wear nice clothes... you want people that you haven’t seen in 40-some years to say, “Oh, Gee! *She* aged well!” ... you know, um... your *ego* gets in there somewhere... and uh... it’s also started me... losing weight. Which is a *big* ... experience for me and this time it’s working! And I feel very good about that”

Times have changed

When Mike was growing up, it was not normal for females to be physically active in 'men's sports' or as 'exercisers' in her community. Being raised by a father who built hockey rinks in the winter time, however, she developed a fondness for sport (especially hockey) from a young age. This was controversial for her, as she lived at a Christian brothers' home and the nuns did not support girls' participation in such activities, particularly as a teenagers. Now, after having raised two boys as hockey players, she is still a loyal fan of the game and so are her family members. The love of sport has become a part of who they are as family unit.

"My *father* was a janitor at a school here in St Catharines... -catholic school- it had been a Christian brothers home and uh ... it had a home attached and that's where I grew up. I was born there and lived there until I was ... over 15 ... and my dad always had two big rinks in the school yard in the winter and the kids were always around... and of course, *girls* were *not* supposed to do certain things... and I liked to play hockey... and the -I had a brother, just older than me, so whatever *he* was doin', *I* was doin'... and I played lacrosse and I played baseball ... and the nuns thought that was terrible! And I'd often dress like my brother so they couldn't see it was me! (says with a laugh) So, I've always... played *games* and... uh, as I grew older it became *dancing* instead of all the games. Yah, so... yes, I've always *been* active, I guess; when I look back on it.

"Not in my teen years. No, it wasn't [socially accepted]. That was **not** something girls *did*" (Mike)

"The Leafs better win tonight again! ... (claps her hands) Wasn't that a game last night?! *Oh!* I've been a real hockey fan for many many many many years. Our oldest boy who is ... 59 -almost 59- when *he* played hockey, that really got me into it and I guess I'm -I'm just one of those people that if I get into something, I get *involved*. *Oh!* That was a terrific game last night! (I: (laughs)) *Oh! Unbelievable!* Right up to the last minute! Yah, they were down the first two periods 1-0, they were down. All of a sudden... they *scored*, then the other team scored -so it's 2-1, then the Leafs scored again... tied it. Went in to overtime and they **beat 'em!** Yah! It would have been nice if they could've done it in regular time, 'cause it would have meant 3 points instead of 2, but they -they won! So... they're on the line again tonight. (chuckles)"

"My husband... loves sports. Our boys -our two boys and they've been involved in them and uh, as a family this is how we *are*. We're still close even though our kids are all *grown* and have kids and ... heavens, we've even got uh, a set of... *great* grandchildren too -a set of *twins*. Our great grandchildren -they're two years old... and so yah, we're involved in family, yah, it keeps you going"

Having lived a relatively active past Mike feels that her activity over the years has influenced her motivation for exercise in the present, because it has become an important part of who she is.

“Well, I guess it *has* now that you think about it, the... things I did years and years ago, I’m trying to get back doin’. I ... didn’t *do* it for a few years there and – and I *missed* it, I guess... I don’t know whether I had that thought in my mind... or whether it was just a matter of uh, not losin’ any more of myself that *way*. I don’t know.”

Struggles associated with being female were not only present in her physical activity behaviour as a child and adolescent, but also in her married life as a new wife and mother. According to Mike, because she was a female in the 40’s, she had to deal with not being treated as an equal in the partnership and had to take a stand in order to establish herself as an independent thinker and doer in her husband’s eyes. The first step for her was acquiring her driver’s license, something most young females today would take for granted. Now, the two of them are on equal ground and both feel empowered to give their opinions and make their own decisions.

“Being independent –it took –it was a struggle... and ... because –when we were married... back in the 40’s, um... women didn’t have the... uh... the *say* in a marriage the way... it is today... by *any* means... and so it took a little doing on a woman’s part to... *establish* herself as a thinking person and capable of many things *besides* looking after the kids and cleanin’ the house. It took a *while* ... for him to realize, “Hey, she’s got a brain!”... at least that’s the way *I* think. You know, that *I* could make a decision. In a marriage... you know, they say everything’s 50/50... **bullshit!** It *isn’t*... uh... *you* give a little more, *he* gives a little more... and it works. We’re coming up to 59 years of marriage, so... it worked. But... it also was important that *I* learned to be a bit independent... and *that* took a lot of doing ... and that was difficult for him to handle... for a *while*... but, then it put us both on the same level... and... it *went* (chuckles).

“For example, I’ll tell you somethin’ else ... my first uh, thing of independence was... we’d been married for... 11 or 12 years, and ... whenever we needed groceries, *he* had to drive me, ‘cause I didn’t drive... so, he happened to say to me, “What do you want for Christmas?” ... and for some strange reason, I said, “I want to learn to drive”. “**What?!**”. “I said, I want to learn to drive”. *Well*, that didn’t go over very good ... anyway, he must have mentioned it to the couple next door to us and her husband ... drove transport trucks and so out of the blue he said, “Well, if you want to learn” he says, “I’ll take you out and...” Okay, so we went out 3 or 4 times... and I wasn’t doing *that well*... and eventually I began to realize that ... whenever Rick could give me a lesson, Bob had to be somewhere else with the car and I thought, “*Oh!*” (with disappointment) and then Bob’s uncle died and left me some money –*not* my husband, *me!* ... and so, out of that money, I bought a new refrigerator... and I took driving lessons... so... Bob knew I was taking the lessons, but he wasn’t paying any attention... and then it came, where it was shopping night, and uh, he went out to the car and I came out and I said to

him, "Get in the passenger seat". I said, "I'm gonna drive... I'll drive to the store, so you can see that I know what I'm doing". I said, "'Cause tomorrow I take my *test*" and he was going away on a bowling weekend and the car was going to be sitting in the driveway. I said, "So, I want you to know that I'm capable, if I get my test—my license tomorrow, that I can start driving"... he just sat there, he wouldn't move. I thought, "Woah!"—I was so *angry*. He didn't want me to take that test! 'Cause then the car wasn't going to be *his* anymore, I would... so anyway, I went to bed that night and I was *so* mad, and I was thinkin' and thinkin'—now whenever he would go away I would have his clothes all folded and out on the bed and all he had to do [rapping finger on table] was like that [demonstrates picking up the bag] and that's to that! I *hid* things... I *hid* them. He came home and he couldn't find things. The guys were waiting for him and (laughs) then he *knew* that I was really angry. When I came home—*with* my license, on my vanity was note with the car keys. It said, "When parking, be sure to put the emergency brake on" and... he was gone. The kids and I went out and I *drove*—we went out for supper that night... and the next morning I drove to Lewiston, New York to see my sister. I was so proud of myself, driving, you know? He was ab-so-lutely *dumbfounded* when he came home and ... the first thing before he even came in the house, he went to the car and checked the mileage. He knew where I'd been... he said he woke up that Saturday morning and thought, "She wouldn't do a thing like—she wouldn't go to *Lewiston*" ... and that was my first thing—that's where he started to realize that... I could *do something*, yah."

"Yes... with *any* of my decisions.... I don't hesitate to voice an opinion with him and he doesn't hesitate to *ask* for my opinion... and so, uh... I think... somehow... women in many years—even years ago, *had* to do that—some *didn't* and they're the ones that you had to feel sorry for. Yah... so what *you've* grown up with knowing... is *not* the way it was... and people—*men naturally* felt that they were the one and only, you know?... yah... and they don't—didn't like it when you... but, he doesn't mind it *now* (laughs). He gets a kick out of uh... me having money of my own... and so forth and... it's— he had *always* been generous with me... as far as *things* are concerned—money or whatever, but it was just that he was the *boss*"

Though Mike was eager to return to the work force after giving birth to both of her sons, she is glad in retrospect that her husband pressured her to stay home with the children and that she did not go back to work until they were teenagers. She feels that her having been home for them as children helped to create the strong bond she has with them today as adults.

"I worked at Bell Canada. That's where he worked and... after our first son was born, they asked me to come back to work and so I said, "I think I'll go"... and Bob says, "Okay..." he said, "then you're gonna to be the bread winner". I said, "**What?!**". He says, "Well..." he says, "*one* of us is going to be with this *child*..." he says, "If you wanna go to work, then *you* go to work and I'll stay home and look after the—look after Brent"... *well*, I couldn't do *that*. So, but then *again* that was his way of saying, "Hey!" you know? "Your job is here with the child".

Which it really *was*... and I was fortunate enough... that I *could* stay... I guess the kids were... Brent was about... *fifteen* when we moved to Toronto and that's when I started to work. Yah... so, uh... maybe *that's* why our kids are so close to us. Because they had a good founding, I guess."

Time and Effort

Mike feels that with her desire for exercise, her adherence to her exercise program, and continuously achieving health gains, she is more motivated to put more time into exercise and to challenge herself to improve so that she can reach the level she was at when left off. Like the initiates, when she knows she is going to be missing time at the YMCA, she makes it a point to engage in exercise in other ways. For instance, when she is away at the cottage over the summer, she drives into a nearby town so she can walk safely on the sidewalks. Furthermore, she feels that it is important to have goals, such as these, in older adulthood because a person essentially 'disappears' when they have given up on life.

"*Absolutely*, uh... as a matter of fact, last summer, every *day* –not every *other* day, but *every day* up North where we go for the summer, I would drive into the little town near us so I could walk on sidewalks and I would do a good walk *every single day*, which I think has paid off, because I'm walking better *here*. I kept walking still because I didn't want to come back *here* and try and get back into it. I wanted to keep going and improving and I *did*."

"Last week um... when we didn't come on Wednesday because of the bad storm there, I came *Thursday* because I was bound I was gonna have my three days! My *husband* didn't come ... on Thursday, I did... and I walked over to [the] mall to meet him for a ride home. Yah... so... I think I'm really motivated. I really *do*."

"Losing a bit of weight has brought my blood pressure down... I'm walking *more*... I'm feeling like I can *do* more... I'm *anxious* to do more... and see how much more I can accomplish and I think as ... a person, you have to have *goals*. I don't care *how old* you are... and if you give up having goals (scoffs)... you're just a nothing. You really are. You just ... I see a couple of friends ... who have given up and I'm not going to do that. No... and I *don't* –a lot of people say to you "Well, how many years do you think you've got?"... Hey! Maybe I'm going to be one of these people that lives to a hundred and five or somethin'. Who knows? As long as I'm *healthy*... and to *stay* healthy you have to *do* things. You can't just sit and vegetate."

Mike's philosophy behind exercise is that "If you don't do it, you lose it! And it's very hard to get it back!" This, coupled with her desire for exercise, helps her refrain from becoming too involved in sedentary activities such as reading and puzzles, which she is very fond of, even though it can be a struggle physically sometimes to force her body to move when she would really like to take a good nap. She feels that by understanding that feelings of tiredness can simply be the result of habitual sedentariness, she is better in

tune with when her body actually needs rest and when it ‘thinks’ it needs rest. On those low motivation days, she reminds herself that she is determined not to give up this part of her life.

“For example, I *love to read*... and do crossword puzzles and jigsaw puzzles and that. But those are *sitting* things... and after I’ve sat for a *while*... you can almost feel yourself like ... wantin’ to sorta close your eyes and go to sleep or somethin’. I think, “Get up!” and so, I get up and get in doin’ somethin’ and ... then I might go back and sit down an hour or so –an hour and a half later... for a little while, but ... something in me just says, “Get up and *go!*”

“Sometimes it’s a *big* effort, because it would be so nice to just close your eyes and go to sleep but *that* can be a *habit* ... that’ I am not going to let get into my life. There *are* the occasional days where I *do* take a nap... but I’ve really worked all morning long –like doing three or four loads of *laundry* and –and so I’m *tired*, so the body says, “Okay, you need to rest!”, but ... I’m not making a habit of it... and that is... I think, important.”

“Just get off my rear end and get moving. That’s it. [Exercise is] a *habit* now. It’s become a habit. It’s not something I’m *going* to give up... and therefore, if I’m *not* going to give up, then I’ve got to keep going... and... it’s kinda convoluted in a way, but that’s the way I’m *thinkin’*’

However many years I’ve got left, I’ll be here truckin’ away!”

Though it was more difficult to motivate herself when she returned to exercise after the arm injury and moving to a new city, she was driven enough by her desire for exercise to stay committed to her regular exercise routine and sometimes would come for an additional session throughout the week. When the weather was good enough she also used to squeeze in additional exercise time by walking instead of driving to visit a relative in a retirement community.

“It was more challenging *mentally* ‘cause I was getting over my *arm*, moving um... trying to find my way around... get back with some of the uh, *family* – extended family and uh... just a lot of things, but I didn’t stop coming every three –every other day. I still did it -as a matter of fact, um, I quite often would come on a Saturday and make it a *fourth* day... and uh, I haven’t done *that* for a while, but maybe now that the weather’s turning nicer... the other thing too that I do, I haven’t been doing this winter that much –I have a sister in law who’s in a house not far from us which is in uh... like a nursing home almost and um, it’s about a 15 minute walk, so I walk over to see her when I can –if the walking’s not too bad. If it *is* I drive over and uh, so that’s –when the good weather comes I –I hike over there every day... have a little visit with her. [I] thought: “Hey! This is an excess –an *extra* one (corrects herself) an extra one”

Need Salience

In Life in General

Competence

In her life in general, Mike feels confident in her ability to run the household. With her husband's memory loss, she finds herself in a position of responsibility for managing both their lives and is confident in her ability to do so. She does not feel 'most' confident in any particular area of her life, rather all of her areas of life tend to blend together at this stage of her life and it mostly comes down to her daily routine.

"Keeping track of our daily... appointments... um... *payments*... that sort of thing –my husband... sort of loses a little bit... so I'm the -the *tracker* of the family... um, so I have to keep my brain alert and focused on what each day should be doing –what we should be doing. So, um... I think that's another area that... I'm exercising... is keeping a calendar and being *aware* of what things are necessary – what needs to be done. For example, *today*... when I leave here, I have to go to the drug store and order uh, all his prescriptions and so forth... and uh, so if I don't do it, you know, he's forgotten himself and there we are. I'm *managing*. I'm managing *both* our lives in that way."

"I don't know. I think it's just... everything *froze*. There's no one area or the other, just –I'm *dealing* with my daily routines ... and that's about it... yah."

Autonomy

After having established herself as independent person over the years, both socially and financially, Mike feels in charge of her own decisions and behaviours and feels that she has an important role in any of the decisions she and her husband make as a couple. These days, since her husband's seizure and associated memory loss, she finds herself being more in charge of their decisions than ever, and perhaps more than she would like to be. Though she volitionally chooses to take on these responsibilities, her husband's dependence can be overwhelming at times and gives rise to worry, which in turn affects her well-being.

"Because I worked, I actually *am* financially independent... and *that* ... is *very... big*"

"*Well*... I have a big say in any of our decisions. That's the way we've always been –no, not *always*. It took a while for me to uh... get him to realize I have a brain... and I can think as well as *he* can. Um... I think I do very well; I manage for *both* of us, because he... had a seizure and it... has... um... caused his memory –his daily memory ... not to be that great. I can tell him something at 9 o'clock and by 11 he, "You didn't tell me that!" –you know? So, I'm thinking for both of us... and making sure that he's thinking and -and doing the right thing. He's extremely healthy and in terrific shape –and it's only just that one thing –that uh, seizure, that affected that one part of his brain. Other than that, he's great. Yah. But... I've gotta think for both of us."

"I try, but sometimes even I lose my patience a little and this bothers me... but, then I think to myself, "Hey, you're *human*" –you know? You can't *help*... these things, you can't be... Polly Anna all the time... and uh... other than that, *no* um... I just *hope* it doesn't get any worse I don't think it *will*, but um... (sighs) it's a worry, it's a worry, you know? There's papers *everywhere* in there, it's terrible! And he *loses* them and it's "Well, what did *you* do with it?" –I didn't even *see* it! You know? So, I do a lot of *searching* and every once in a while I'll say to him, "Bob... let's... go through and see –you know, and deal with a few things" and I know this *bothers* him. But, occasionally if I *don't*, something slips by –a bill that needed to be paid and uh... I try to check the mail as it comes in each day and make sure, you know? And note things down, but uh, even things slip away from me too... Yah... so... other than that, um... we're fine (laughs)."

"It isn't *bothering* me ... it's put a little *pressure*, but I think that's good for me, because uh, this makes *my* brain have to work as well as my body, so that's not a problem"

When it comes to handing over control to others in general life, Mike is not keen to do so because she is still capable of making her own decisions and would not want others having that power over her.

"Because, any... thing that would be like that... would affect *me* and ... I don't want somebody else... making important decisions *for* me. I'm still capable of thinking... no, I don't want anybody else making... not even my husband... other than, he can decide sometimes where we're going out to *eat*, but you know (laughs)."

Relatedness

In her life in general, Mike feels very meaningfully connected to her immediate family (husband and children), and believes that is due to the supportive and non-controlling environment they provided as their children were growing up. Her friends also provide a sense of relatedness for Mike. Of her friends, there is one family in particular that she and her husband are close to because of the bonds they developed living in the same neighbourhood and working together over their years in Toronto.

"[Our children are] always interested... uh, two of our children live away from us and there isn't two days goes by that they don't get in touch. "How are ya? What are you doing?" you know? I think we're very lucky and somehow we did something right because our kids like to keep in touch with us and uh, two of them are married, the other that isn't –our middle son, he uh, just sold his place in Toronto. Developers bought it for a **whacking** amount of money! And he's moving ... to [the] Island where our oldest son lives and uh, he's just bought a 4 bedroom house with an in-ground swimming pool. He told me when he was selling this house -he says, "Whatever I buy Mum," he says, "there'll be a bedroom for you and Dad" (laughs). So, I think our kids are ... terrific!"

“And I think the one *big* thing about –their father’s always been there for help... to *know* how to do things... and *I* have not been an interfering mother-in-law and I think *that* is very big. I’m *there*... but I don’t try to put *my* viewpoint over on something that doesn’t involve me. That’s *their* family. *They* have to look after them, but I’m *there* –Hey! *I’m Gram!* (laughs)”

“We have... a lot of friends, through the years, um... (laughs) There’s one fam – one couple in Toronto that were a big influence with us, um... my second job was at an insurance company and I –when I applied for the job, this gentleman was the one that interviewed me and at the end of the interview, he looked at me kinda funny and he said, “Aren’t you Targa’s mother?”... I just *stared* at him. Targa was our *dog* – a big, big black lab and where we lived, behind our house was the big hydro right-of-way and a big park –beautiful place... and our dog would be in the yard and people would be walking in the fields behind it and uh, in the park... and they’d come up to the fence and the dog would be there and here, this *man* had been walking his young daughter for months and kept seeing the dog and occasionally saw me in the yard and then *I* show up looking for a job (says with a laugh)... and we’ve become friends and ever since then –that was back in 1970. Yah... and even *he*’s retired now (laughs) ... so, uh yah, that was an influence, *definitely*... an influence... and through him, of course, we met his wife and his kids.”

In Exercise

Competence

With respect to exercise, Mike feels she has developed a greater sense of confidence in her ability to overcome challenges associated with exercise at the level she is currently working at. Not only is she proud of her accomplishments thus far, but she has a strong sense of conviction that she will accomplish her bigger goals.

“I think uh, by *improving* ... as I go along, that *that* shows confidence... I know what I can do and I’m doing it... and when I reach that level, I go a bit further (I: mhmmm). Yah, so *that*’s my confidence.”

“I’m *proud* ... that I’ve accomplished that. That I can *do* twelve laps... and the other day I added two more, but I took a little rest in between, and so now my new goal is to do 14 laps without stopping... and I hope I’ll – I *know* I will accomplish it and I’m shooting for doing two miles –that’s my big goal. I don’t know *when*, but it’ll happen (says with a chuckle).”

When first starting back to exercise, Mike was not as confident as she is now, but she was determined to achieve her goals. This is dissimilar to Rae who felt that the program had to prove itself to her, taking a more passive role in the achievement of her accomplishments. This is likely due to the fact that Mike had already experienced success as a regular exerciser before having to take time off and re-initiate her program. Rae,

having not been a regular exerciser prior to initiation, did not have the same experiences to base her expectations on.

“I couldn’t say *confident*. All I can say is I was *determined*... uh... I didn’t have any particular *goal*... I was going to walk until I was too tired... and it’s taken me this time to do it –to walk that way... um... I just keep going, that’s all. Yah. I’m *going* to do it. *That* I know... *when* it’ll *happen* when I get the two miles in, I’m hoping it will be by the end of this year and uh... we’ll go from there again.”

Autonomy

Mike feels that she is the one who is ultimately in charge of her decision to exercise and the types of exercise she engages in, because she is the only person who can control what her body does and when. She is very self-directed in her exercise program, as she participates in independent activities such as walking, resistance training, and stretching, and does not attend any classes.

“Because I’m the only one that can... make my body *do* what I want it to do ... and uh, as long as I can keep tellin’ it to get going, I’ll keep doin’ it. If I don’t *want* to ... I wouldn’t be doing it. So, my *wanting to* is there. That’s what’s motivating me ... and hopefully it’ll keep on”

When first starting back, however, she did seek the guidance of a personal trainer (Nina) whom she worked with for 3-4 sessions over 3-4 months. She found that working with Nina was very beneficial in terms of motivation in the early stages of initiation because, like Australia, she felt accountable to her leader and *wanted* to show her how hard she had been working and that her instruction was truly helping her. She now takes what she learned from Nina and applies it to her regular program.

“Once Nina told me –showed me (clears throat) the exercises that help me the most. That’s what I do. Yah... and it has been –it *has* been helpful because it gave me a reason to come here for starters, which I was going to do anyway, *but* ... the more I did the exercises that *she* worked out for me... *um*... the better I felt and... so... I wanted to –to *show* her that she wasn’t wasting her time with me. That I was –I was trying. Yah. Because she was giving time to *me* ... so I had to show her that it was working. Yes... and then unfortunately she *left*... and uh... uh, but that –she was here for I don’t know how long, but with *me* for three or four months ... so uh... they’ve got me into a routine to *start* with, yah.

“Not the pressure to *come in*, but that –the pressure that... I *did* all those exercises... *each* day... and that they *showed* that I was doing them, so she could *see* that I was doing what she... spent her time teaching me to do.”

While Mike was happy to hand over some decision making to Nina insofar as the exercises go, and though she felt that Nina was in charge of the design of her exercise program, she did not feel a lack of control in the decision making process, because a) she viewed Nina as a “support” who offered suggestions, not demands, b) because she was

grateful to have the help, and c) she did not feel obligated to follow through with all of Nina's suggestions if they were not consistent with her needs and desires and thus maintained her sense of autonomy throughout the initiate process. For example, unlike Brandy, Mike was not keen on using the FitLinx system to track and monitor her progress because it was not valuable enough to her to justify spending the requisite time to learn and use the program.

““I felt *Nina* was [in charge], because uh ... I *wanted* to do it, but I felt *she* was in charge and she was working with me and finding the new little exercises that would help for what I needed. It took a little doing on her part as well as my own... ‘cause at first all I was gonna to do was the walking... and uh... she started, “Well, you need to do this and” or “This might help you” and uh, when she found out that the arm was in problems, then... she just figured out the best exercises and they’re what I do –what I do. She knew I wanted to get better than I was and she was helping me. That was the big thing. I *knew* that eventually I was going to be able to *do* things that I wasn’t able to do *then*.”

“I didn’t feel a lack of control. No... I still felt that I was ... Nina was helping me –*supporting* me, shall we say, but I was still the one saying, “Yes, I can do that”... or “No, I don’t want to do that”

“The one thing that she wanted me to do was to –um, do computers –you know? Everything you did, you put it in the computer... and I said, “No, I don’t want *that*. I can’t be bothered with it. I know I can do this myself. I don’t need a computer to say, “Oh hey! You did *that*”. So uh, I –I didn’t do the computer part of it.”

This sense of acceptance in handing over control may have also been fostered through the knowledge that her time with Nina was temporary and that her personal trainer was only there to help put her on her feet, not to infinitely dictate her exercise experience to her.

“No, I knew it was only a temporary thing, because I was a new member of the – of the thing, which was a *great* thing. And I’m sure they do this with other people too...”

Mike likes that the YMCA offers such a variety of exercise activities to choose from and feels that it is the kind of place that offers something for everyone. Though she does not intend to broaden her activity involvement as of yet, seeing that there are bikes available to be used she has started to consider the possibility of incorporating it into her workout in the future when she wants to. She agrees that if the option to use bikes had not been there, the thought would not have crossed her mind.

“I’ve been thinking lately that maybe I’d try the bike... and so one of these days, maybe I *will*... and I’ll have to wait and *see*... if-if that –*but*, the thought is in my head, so... the way things have worked *so far* –when the thought comes...eventually, I try it. Yah.”

"I *have* told people, "You're *idiots* if you don't come and join the Y!" Well, you *are*! Because it's going to do *so* much for you. There's so much here that if they don't want to *walk*, there's other things they can do; at least you're getting' out and *doing* it. *That's* the whole thing."

Relatedness

As an exerciser, Mike does not feel particularly connected to anyone other than her husband, who is also her walking buddy, with the exception of a few peers that she has befriended on the track at the YMCA and a few of her friends that still walk at Variety Village in Toronto.

"Not really... other than people I see every day at the track and you just sort of chat a little bit or -as you're walking by or whatever, but uh... some of the people in Toronto uh, they still phone me... to see how I'm doing -they're still going to uh... uh, Variety Village and uh... no, I don't think so."

She feels that she has not yet quite developed the same level of friendship with her peers at the YMCA as she had with those at Variety Village, because she has not been at the Y as long and developing those relationships has been a "process *all* the way along" for her. There is one couple, however, whom she is considering inviting for a social event outside of the exercise context.

"Not -well, *here one* ... uh, yes... there is a wo -woman and her husband. He swims and she walks and does exercises, and we *do* sit and chat... *actually*, there's 3 or 4 people that uh, we... uh -haven't taken it any farther than seeing each other *here*, yah... her name is Andrea *Ogre*. That's her name. That's her last name, *Ogre* and when she met me she asked me, "What's your name?" and I said, "Oh, Mike -weird name, eh?" and she thought I meant that my last name was 'Weird' (laughs) and she just found out a couple of weeks ago that it *isn't*, that it's Charlton (laughs), 'cause she thought "Oh this was really something!", somebody had a name as bad as hers! (laughs) I thought that was funny. Yah... so uh, I've been thinking -I've discovered that they like to play Euchre and I love that game too, so I'm *seriously* thinking of taking the... *friendship* just a little further, asking them over, yah."

Mike has noticed that there are a good number of older adult exercisers at the YMCA and there is one in particular who she feels looks up to her as a role model and source of motivation while walking on the track. At this point she does not feel that there are really any role models for her to look up to, however, when she sees others who walk faster than she does it stimulates her to unintentionally walk faster.

"If you *ever* walk around and look at this place, there are a lot of elderly people here that *are* doing their best and moving. There's a gentleman that I see up on the walking thing and... *I'm* motivating *him*! Because he says to me, "How many laps did you do?" -you know? And he's so proud, because he has worked his way up

to 6... and then he sits for a little while and then he does another one... and maybe *two*, and so seeing *me* walk is giving him a –a reason to... yah.”

“You see some of the others walking and you think, “Oh *God!* I wish I could walk that fast!” –you know? So... you find yourself moving a little faster too. Yes, definitely... and you see these young girls *running* around the track and you think, “Oh my *God!*” (laughs). It’s wonderful. I *would* like to walk *faster* than I am ... but that will come. I’m faster than I *was*. So, eventually it’ll come... but uh, *no*, I uh... I don’t think [there are any role models for me here]”

Need Value

In Relation To Herself as a Person

In thinking about herself as a person, and analyzing the three needs based on levels of importance, Mike made her decision based on the relationship she saw between them such that autonomy was of primary importance, competence secondary, and relatedness tertiary. Autonomy was placed in first because she felt that if she is “not in control, um, [she] wouldn’t have confidence” and relatedness was put in last place because she felt that she does not need other people to create feelings of autonomy and competence for her. Based on her previous statements about her very strong connections with her family members, it is possible that Mike was not clear on what the question was asking, despite several rewording and probe attempts by the investigator.

“These connections... are not *that* important to me. I don’t *need* other people to keep me motivated. Yes, being in control of my decisions and behaviours... yah, I –I would say that has to be the first and that would, of course, mean that I have confidence in my abilities, and I don’t need other people... to... *create* those things for me. I already *have* it.”

“By being in control of *my* decisions and behaviours, that gives me *confidence*... and makes me more *able* to... function...and other people aren’t going to ... change that...”

In The Eyes of Society

When contemplating how society at large would value the three needs, Mike initially felt that relatedness would be of primary importance, but later switched it to competence with relatedness in second and autonomy in third position. Her initial instinct to place relatedness in first was based on the notion that in society you have to take other people into consideration, and as such each individual has less control in the context of society at large. After discussing issues regarding a lack of etiquette in society later on in the interview, she changed her answer so that competence was in the first position because she does not believe that people make many meaningful connections these days.

“You would have to be thinking of other people, not just yourself ... and you’d still have your confidence, but you’re not in control. ‘Cause there’s *more* of them!

... there are a lot of other *things* influencing *everything*... in your life in general. You *aren't* in control. You're only in control for your own self... the government, um... (chuckles)... the by laws in the city, um... there's so many other *things* that control that part of your life... you're only... in control in your own home. Yah."

As an Exerciser

As an exerciser, Mike felt that the needs were of the same importance as they were for her as a person with autonomy being the need of primary importance, competence second, and relatedness third. This is not surprising given that exercise has become integrated into her sense of identity and self. Autonomy was placed in first because, as an exerciser, it is of primary importance for her to feel like she is in charge of her exercise behaviour. Furthermore, she claims that she would have also placed them in this order even when she started back. This is understandable given that she had already been an established exerciser in the past and already expectations of what the experience would entail.

"Well, I guess we're going back to the way I had them before... because that's the way I think (chuckles)."

Connecting the Needs to Motivation

While Mike feels that all three needs are not necessarily equal in importance to her, she does believe that they are all important and necessary for motivation. The role of relatedness, however, she feels is secondary to autonomy and competence in that meaningful connections may develop if one has established confidence in their abilities and maintained control of their decisions and behaviours. Like Simba, Mike feels that meaningful connections happen passively over time because they depend on other people, where as autonomy and competence can be actively sought out and achieved entirely on one's own. Though Mike enjoys the connections she has established at the YMCA, " 'cause you're going to sit and cool down *somewhere*, and uh, -half the time it's because [she's] waiting for [her] husband, 'cause he likes to shower after he's finished". While those connections are not a noted source of motivation for her, she does believe that some people do exercise in order to satisfy their need of relatedness.

"Yes... there's definitely a connection... *all* of them are *required* to keep you going. yah...if you don't have confidence in what you can do... you're not going to do it... and if you're in control of it, then you're building your confidence... *and*, I don't think... meaningful connections to others is gonna do a great deal ... for you if you don't have the confidence to want to do it ... on your own."

"No... I don't think that they're *required* ... [meaningful connections] uh, might *develop*, you're confident and you're in control. *Hopefully* you've got an open mind that if there was ... a meaningful connection, or somebody could help you *more*, that you would accept it... but to be *looking* for it; that isn't what I would be doing."

“Yes... I’ve seen a couple of women up there. One I’m sure is looking for a man (laughs). I think some people come maybe just because they’re *lonesome*... and this is a place to come where they can *see* people. I’m sure there are people that come here *because* of that... my main reason to come is because I’m exercising. But... everybody isn’t ... isn’t like that.

Well-Being and Exercise

In general, Mike perceives her psychological well-being as “very good”, because exercising has helped her restore mental clarity, just like obtaining employment helped her stave off depression when her children were all in high school. Her transition to retirement was less trying, however, because her husband had already been retired for four years and thus she was not home alone during her transition.

“Very good. Um... the sort of *fuzzy* feeling is gone... because I’m exercising... and I *honestly* think –and uh, this is a thought I’ve had for a *long* time, that people who have... *depression* ... if they got off their *ass* and got moving and got their blood flowing, it’s *bound* to help!”

“Yah... the nice part about [retiring] was that we could go to Florida for a couple of months (laughs)... in the winter. Uh... and Bob was retired *too* and uh, so ... we had *fun* together.”

Though Mike claims that relatedness is not of importance to her as a person, in terms of motivation, the following account of her depression in Toronto illustrates that a lack of relatedness does indeed have an impact on her psychological well-being:

“It’s bound to help... because I look back on that time in Toronto when I couldn’t sleep and that... *depression* –that’s what it *was*. I wasn’t happy. I didn’t have my friends, my family close to me. My kids were there, yes, but I was alone all day long. Once I got to work... and *they* couldn’t believe me, because I would accomplish so much while I was at work –but it was *fun*, it was something new and different *and*... it perked me up. yah.”

While exercising, Mike finds that she tends to feel better as the bout elapses and she comes closer to reaching her goals. She is not, however, always focused completely on her exercise which is not surprising given the repetitive, continuous movement of walking as opposed to formal exercise classes where participants have to pay attention to an instructor.

“Well, for one thing, I’m *counting* the laps as I do them... and I’m feeling better each time I say, “Oh gee! I’ve only got 7 more to go!” or somethin’ like *that*, you know? And uh... I’m not always *completely* focused on what I’m doing, I uh... I have strange thoughts running through my head, you know: “Oh, maybe when I go home I’ll do so-and-so” or whatever... you know how you are your mind just ... travels on its own, yah... but, I do feel that I *am in* ... control of myself as I am doing this in my own way. Yah. I notice people passing me –‘cause they *do* pass

me uh... I guess you can't help hearing some conversations... I see some *handicapped* people that come in and uh, they have somebody with them –helping them and I think, “Aren't I lucky” “that I can still move myself?” and uh... it's just... a nice experience each day.”

After exercising, Mike generally feels “great!” and rejuvenated though she admits that on occasion there are times that she is relieved that the hard work is over, but she still feels good about it. Unlike most of the other participants, Mike is pushing herself in her exercise program, but this is because she wants to return to the physical fitness she had achieved before her injury. Thus, because she is intentionally challenging herself, she is more likely to experience more difficult days than those who choose to ease up.

“*Some days* it's “Wow! Is that ever glad –am I ever glad that's over!” (chuckles) You're feeling good, but you're ... some days it's a *chore*... and... it would be so easy to... say “Forget it!”, but I *won't*. But I can't help feeling, “Boy am I ever glad *that's* over today!” But then I come back the next time and, “Hey! It just feels great. It's like, “*Oh!* That felt so good!” –you know? And uh, ... I don't know, I just ... come down and sit and wait for *him* while he has his shower and then somebody says, “Oh, *hi!* How are you?” and you know, sits down and starts to talk... and I've –I've made a few uh... connections like that... and uh, it just feels so good and especially when you go outside and the sun's shining and it's a little bit warmer than it's been... it feels much nicer, you feel like, “Woah! I could go and do something else!”.

She agrees that when re-initiating her exercise program, it was more difficult to motivate herself because of the physical complications associated with her arm injury and the transition of moving to a different city.

“It was more challenging *mentally* 'cause I was getting over my *arm*, moving um... trying to find my way around... get back with some of the uh, *family* – extended family and uh... just a lot of things, but I didn't stop coming every three –every other day”

Need Thwarting

Competence

If on a mentally good day Mike was not performing as well as she usually does, it would not let it bother her. She would simply tell herself that she will do better the next time, or plan to include an extra session that week. She feels that this would have differed when she first started back, in that she would have been more accommodating to her body. Above performance, the most important thing for Mike is that she came.

“It would just make me say, “You're gonna do it... the next day when you come!” I might even think, “Put an extra day *in!*” you know? And I'm not *kidding* about that, I –I really mean it. My feelings are that I came, I did... *what* I could do. So

okay, maybe I'll do better next day ... but I *came* and I *did* and *that's* what I want to do."

"[When I first came back] I probably would have said, "Well maybe I needed to take a little more of a break and *then* go back and do a bit more" or *something*, but uh... I would *still* have thought, "Well I *came* and I *did* what I could do". "I *came*" –*that's* the important thing. I'd be happy that I came... but I'd be pushing for the next time when I came. yah."

Autonomy

Similarly, if on a mentally good day Mike's sense of autonomy was being compromised (for example, when walking track etiquette is breached and impedes on her performance), she may upset her acutely, but she would not let it bring her down.

"I'd probably get a little annoyed... like, sometimes you're held up with somebody else on the track uh...I don't know what –it um... I don't think I'd be *that* –I'd be *upset*, but I just keep goin'. Yah. Then you might think, "Oh! Those asses!" you know? (laughs) Sometimes there's three fellas that walk... and they *talk* and they're **loud**! And uh... when they *pass* you, they might bump a little -or just sorta get in your way... but that only lasts for a second or two. Yah, it isn't –it isn't a big thing. But it's just –they aren't payin' attention and when you've got a place like this and you're all... walking and doing whatever, like, you have to – you know some people are so focused on themselves, they don't... they don't see any –anything else. It's what *they're* doing that –that's so important... at least that's what I think (laughs)."

"Exactly! Exactly... that's what it is. Well, you find [issues of etiquette] everywhere. You do. You do. People are so focused on what *they're* doing that they don't pay attention to what *other* people –you know? Which is something *we learned* when we were kids... you know, you ... *watched* other people and you didn't get in their way and you were polite, you know? (chuckles) It used to be a *man* would open up the door and smile at you, but now they *fling* the door open and they go through 'em- **whack**! It's just... yah... and I always think, "I feel sorry for them"... somebody didn't... teach them something... yah."

Relatedness

Finally, either as an initiate or reflective maintainer, if on a mentally good day she did not experience the meaningful connections she was accustomed to experiencing through exercise, it would not bother her because she recognizes that not all people are as committed as she is and her main reasons for exercising are for her health, not to socialize.

"No, it wouldn't bother me, because everybody uh, doesn't come as faithfully as I do and uh... so it really wouldn't bother me. I came, I did what I was doing... I'm finished, I'm going home.

Today

Before Class

On the day of the interview, Mike felt “very capable”, “very much in charge”, but not connected to others (because she had spent the morning alone) before coming in to the YMCA to exercise.

“Very capable. Yah, I was up... dressed, had my breakfast, did some chores... *all* with the thought that I’m leaving the house at 10 o’clock to get here and uh, moving around... *fast*, I was movin’ ... so...”

“Oh, very much in charge today (said with enthusiasm), because I drove myself over. Because uh, he would’ve been waiting around for me for *hours* [because of the interview] so I uh, I had nobody to –I didn’t have to um... be ready for *him*. I was doing *what* I wanted, *when* I wanted and *away* I went, but he was watching for me when I got here (says with a giggle), because he beat me here this morning and uh he says “How come you’re so *long*?” (laughs)

“Not [connected] to other people, because I was all by myself. Yah... and I was uh, comin’ here and I was happy.”

During/ After Class

During and after class, however, she felt more meaningfully connected to others, still very capable (though she was tired), and more in charge after having accomplished what she had decided to do.

“Um... *really* connected, um... when I finished, uh, I was sitting just off the track and Bob was waiting for me and this other fella came and –and started *talking*, and uh... we had had a good conversation on Monday with him and he thought of a couple of things to ask us ... and uh, he was glad to see us, so uh, we had quite a chat for about 15 minutes and then I realized, ooh, I better get downstairs! It’s nearly time to meet you! (referring to the interview) (laughs).

“Very [capable], because uh, I new I was going to do my twelve laps... and I *did it*! And I did it in the time that I had allotted myself, so... I felt real good. I was *tired* (laughs) ... uh... well, yah, it felt –‘cause I knew this interview was coming and so I felt I was up to doing it, so I guess I felt capable.”

“I *did it*. So I guess I *was* in charge. It’s another day that I did what I set out to do”

6: Reflective Maintainer: Rae

Participant Characteristics

Rae is an 81 year old regular exerciser with a BMI of 24.5. She typically expends 1540 kcal of energy each week on physical activity, with the majority of her energy expenditure occurring through vigorous physical activity during her leisure time. Rae had been adhering to her Aqua Fit exercise program for 12 years at the time of the interview.

Why

As a reflective maintainer, Rae's immediate response when asked about why she exercises was that she enjoys it, suggesting an element of intrinsic regulation. She also participates for more identified reasons, such as physical and psychological health benefits, and socializing. The physical health benefits are important to her because exercise has helped her cope with back and joint problems, while the psychological health benefits have helped her deal with depressive symptoms. Though enjoyment was her instinctive response, Rae feels that the health benefits are most important to her because they make her "feel better".

"Why do I exercise? Because I enjoy it! And it's good for my health. I enjoy it and it's good for me. Uh... because I know it's good for my health... and I feel better when I've –I've been here and um... I enjoy it ... I enjoy it, and I enjoy the camaraderie ... –friends"

"If you're having an off day and you're just feeling a bit down in the dumps and if you came into the Y and went swi –went to Aqua Fit, I feel a lot better when I'm finished; mentally *and* physically. [It's] psychological sometimes, sometimes I –I *have* had depression and uh, it's one way to feel better –is to make myself go to the Y!"

Aside from improvements to her physical and psychological condition, Rae's sense of enjoyment is also derived from an inherent love of the water, which was a frequently recurring theme throughout her interview and provides further evidence of intrinsic regulation.

"Oh, well... that's –that's, uh ... wonderful! I love the water"
 "I've always loved the water"

The social aspect of her exercise experience is something that Rae values dearly because many of the people in her general social circle have passed away, but (like the other participants) she considers these social bonds and interactions to be an added bonus. As such, seeing her exercise buddies *is* a source of motivation for her, but it is not a primary reason for her engagement in exercise. Rae's social experience at the YMCA does differ from the other participants, in that her commitment to the 'Cafeteria Club' (the group of Aqua Fit women that she socializes with before, after, and outside of class)

is much more involved and regular, reflecting a sense of community. This is not surprising given that she has been attending the same class for the past 12 years.

“[The social aspect of it] means *a lot*. Unfortunately... we’re all getting *older*, so there aren’t as many of us!”

“Yes, the people -we’ve had *close* association with each other and... other than the Y, and might go out to lunch together –the group of us... we have coffee together and, uh, it’s been enjoyable. We’re all about the same age category, so we have a lot of things to talk about –and we’ve gone out together and uh, once when it was someone’s birthday and remember to bring a card and have a little – some nice... -bring a cake or.. so it’s a -sort of a nice association. That’s someone you wouldn’t have met unless you’d come here. It’s quite nice.”

“Well, I -I *do*, uh, take pills for depression... I (clears throat) and um... I find if I’m with people I feel, uh, I feel a lot better. There’s always a little group of people at the Y, when I came and uh, we did have coffee after... and talk about our *days* and what’s going on... and you feel better then.”

While the prospect of interacting with the Cafeteria Club helps motivate Rae to transport herself to the facility and engage in the exercise class, when it comes to physically doing the exercise she feels that her friends really have no bearing on her motivation because once she is in the water, it is a very individual experience for her.

“Um... I don’t think they really influence, uh, me ... as far as going in the, you mean *doing* the Aqua Fit or that? Uh, well, if someone’s going in you say “well, then I can guess I can go in today too”, you know... even though you’re not feeling up to it... a hundred percent.

“It’s an individual thing... it’s your *own* thing ... that you’re in the water. It doesn’t depend on anybody else –what they’re doing. They may not be able to do what -what you do, or you may not be able to do what they can do. So, you just do what your body ... *allows* you to do. It’s just the way I think, uh ... I do what *I* can do, and they do what *they* can do and they may be able to do *more* than you can, but uh ... I think it makes you feel better when you come out of the water, no matter *what* you do in the water in exercise form.”

With regards to *who* motivates her to exercise, Rae stated an emphatic “Me!” and believes that she is the most important person in her motivation for exercise. She concedes, however, that her husband has also been an important source of encouragement and is exemplary in his commitment to his own exercise behaviour, particularly during bad weather days which are a barrier for her physically and mentally as an older adult. Though Rae does not typically need to be reminded to attend her exercise classes, on days when the weather is bad and her husband inquires into her exercise plans she develops a feeling of guilt when intending not to go and that experience of introjected regulation helps her overcome the weather barrier, so long as she is able to move her car out of the driveway.

“*Actually*, my husband does encourage me sometimes... he says “aren’t you going to the Y? ... *today*?” Sometimes I think “well, I won’t bother going out; the weather’s miserable” and then my husband will say: “aren’t you going to the Y today?” He’s much better... motivated than I am, I think. I need a little encouragement sometimes (laughs) if the weather’s not good. It’s the male in him, I guess (laughs) ... I think men are more go-go, as far as not worrying about the weather or something like that.”

“I get a guilt feeling if I don’t go sometimes (laughs) and it... I’ll get off the chair and get busy and get going (chuckles)”

“The days when I’m out there and the weather’s not nice, it’s snowing, [I think] “do I really want to go out today?” (giggles), and if my husband hasn’t shovelled... the driveway... I don’t go, you know, I don’t go start cleaning the car off and –if I were younger I would. [It’s] more to do with *age* related, than not wanting to go”

Though both she and her husband exercise at the YMCA, they transport themselves separately and engage in different activities, so she does not feel that he is a direct source of motivation to *be* an exerciser, rather they simply enjoy their respective activities.

“No, we don’t come together. He comes and does his thing upstairs and I... I do mine in the water. He enjoys doing what *he’s* doing, and I enjoy what *I’m* doing (chuckles).”

“My husband says the best thing I ever did ... was coming to the Y... because uh, uh... I guess I was so much *happier* and uh... I *felt* better.

Rae’s husband, son, and daughter (she has no grandchildren) are the most influential people in her life in general and she feels that she has a strong connection with her children, though she and her daughter “disagree the most”. While her husband does influence her exercise experience, she feels that her children do not. Rather, like Simba, she sees herself as more of a role model for her children, particularly her daughter who joined the YMCA after Rae had suggested it to her.

Being and Becoming an Exerciser in Older Adulthood

While Rae’s enjoyment of her exercise program is a major source of motivation for her as a long term adherer, this was not the case when she was an initiate. Rather, she began exercising after retiring from her job because she had been experiencing back problems and someone had suggested to her that water based exercise may help her. Though she was hopeful that the exercise would be a solution to her problem, she was not convinced at the start and the program “had to prove itself”. Her decision to choose the YMCA was based on her previous experiences with the organization, as she used to attend social clubs when she first moved to the area after she was married. She feels that

her membership at the YMCA was a valuable asset in her transition to living in a new place, as it also opened doors to meeting new people and making new friends.

“Well, because I was having back problems and I decided that – I heard that water’s good for -to exercise *in*... and uh, it helps you mentally and physically.”

“I had been associated with the Y... *prior* to that, but not on a physical... sense. I used to go to the Y –the young *wives* club, they called it, when I was first married and *that’s* a long time ago! I made good friends actually, when I first came to St. Catharines, and went to the Y downtown more than fifty years ago (chuckles)”

“It was good, because I think I -I think I make friends easily, so... with some people, you never really get to know them ... and other people are easier to know. I didn’t *have* any friends when I moved to St. Catharines, so that’s where I met most of my fr -friends are through the Y”

As an initiate, Rae recalls her experience as having been something “enjoyable” that helped her “completely feel better”, because the activities in the water provided a welcome distraction that allowed her to forget about her physical ailments for a short time. She remembers having had a lot of back pain when she first started, but also that the exercise helped to alleviate that discomfort.

“If you have health problems you forget about them when you’re in the water and exercising. Uh, because you’re with other *people* and, uh, I don’t talk about my problems when I... am *here* and uh... so... it –it just –enjoy being with *friends* and -and doing the *exercises*, which I know help me. Your mind isn’t on your *self* when you’re in the water doing exercises, you’re ... you’re following a *program* and so your mind is somewhere else.”

“Uh... I think I was having a lot of back problems then, but I was... -I did my exercise from the deeper part of the -not the *deep end*, but –*stand*, like into my chest in the water when I did my exercises ... and, I always felt better when I got out of the water.”

Though she cannot recall for certain how much more difficult the exercise was for her at that time, she does remember the challenges she had with motivating herself to attend class. She feels that it is an advantage to her now that she has forgotten about the physical challenges from her initiate days, as she no longer has problems motivating herself anymore.

“I guess it *was* [more difficult]. I’ve sort of forgotten all about it, but I did have a lot of back problems back at that point and I don’t have them now.”

“Oh yes! [I had problems motivating myself] You talk yourself into it [says with a laugh] Well, I’d done so many exercises –floor exercises at home. I guess they did *some* good, but I feel the water really did a lot ... uh, helped me a lot more”

Being Female

While Rae acknowledges that the vast majority of exercisers in her Aqua Fit class are female, she does not feel that it makes a difference with respect to the atmosphere of the class. She attributes the lack of a male presence in the class to differing lifestyles, namely work commitments, of men and women.

“I never really thought about *that* part of it... uh, there’s the odd man that comes in our class, but not too many... and um, it doesn’t –being female, I don’t think it ... has any effect on it. Whether we’re male or female, it (chuckles)... it wouldn’t matter.

“No, I don’t think that has any bearing on it. Like, uh... most *men*, unless they’re retired... uh, don’t get the opportunity to come here, I guess... the same because of the hours... you know, if you’re working or... as far as the exercise class in the day time.”

Though she does not feel that one’s gender is of particular importance in the exercise experience today, like Simba, she recognizes that times have changed and that there were fewer opportunities and less support for women to formally exercise in the past. Instead, the activities women did participate in were of a more social nature.

“Times *have* changed. Um, I don’t think the –the YMCA had ladies in the class when I was young, it was strictly a *men’s* YMCA ... and it was strictly for *men*. But there *was* a YWCA, so that’s why I belonged to the YWCA. I never came to the YMCA until I moved here. There was one in Toronto –oh, several... but I never went there. I don’t think they had ladies then, going to classes.”

“Uh, I never really thought much about physical exercise at the Y, um... when I was younger... and I did belong to the –a YWCA, as I said, and um.... Hmmm. I did go –I did go swimming the odd time I got involved, but really didn’t go to a *class* ... and um... it was... during the *war*... the end of the war, that I was going to the classes and they used to have a lot of military people come and dance, so it was more like –having dances for the arm -the service people. It was more of a social thing and it would be an evening thing”

Time and Effort

In terms of time commitment, Rae *makes* time for her exercise classes at the YMCA and only skips a class for health related events (i.e., doctor appointments, illness, etc.) because she believes that exercising on a regular basis is important. Though she has fewer problems with motivation and has increased enjoyment with her exercise class, she does not think that she is exercising more now than she used to when she was an initiate, because health problems are more prevalent in advanced age and can become a barrier.

“I like to come on a regular basis. I think it does your body... uh, it’s more advantageous to come on a *regular* basis than once in a while.”

“I don’t think I *do* [exercise more] actually, because when you become *older* you have more health problems, so sometimes you’re not here as frequently, [but] I never think of *stopping* the Y. I haven’t thought *that* at all (chuckles)”

“Uh...well, sometimes I think: “well, I don’t want –I don’t wanna go here, or do *this*, because it’s my Y day” So, I always set that aside for our progr –our exercise program. So, it’s important. It *is* a priority. To *me* it’s a priority, you know, my husband too, like I said, you know, he’s hooked *too* (chuckles) ... so that’s pretty good for people that are in their eighties, I think!”

In terms of effort put forth during her classes, Rae is happy doing what she feels she physically can and, like Simba and the Initiates, does not feel that she needs to push herself or keep up with the others in her class if she is unable to. As such, she feels that as an older adult she needs to be in touch with the messages her body while exercising because she wants to avoid harming her body. Ultimately, she feels it is more important for her to *do* the program, feel good, and stay healthy than to push herself for the sake of challenge.

“*Well*, I always feel that I do what I can in the class... physically. I just do my regular thing (chuckles) because I –I –I just don’t think that when you get *older* your joints are as flexible and... you have to do what your body tells you ... and uh ... *do* the best you can! If you have any joint problems, you have to be careful when you get older... that you don’t do something that’s gonna –going to, uh... send you to the *doctor*! (laughs)”

Need Salience

In Life in General Competence

In her life in general, Rae feels that she is still confident in her abilities in general even though she is aware that her body does not function as optimally as it once did and certain activities are more difficult to do at this stage in her life. Though this challenges her, she does not say to herself “well, I can’t do that!”, instead she takes a more positive approach: “I’d rather *try* and see what I *can* do”. In general, she feels most confident in her ability to do her exercises and home-making and is becoming less confident in her mental capacities, as she notices that her memory is not as keen as it once was.

“Well, I’m still very confident, even though I *can’t* do the things I used to do! (laughs) I *think* I can still do those things –sometimes... –make the effort – gardening or –or things like that, that I –I’m aware *now* that I’m not as ... *agile* as I used to be. Let’s put it that way.”

“Oh, I’m fine with home-making, but uh, I just –because of my *physical* condition I can’t do *as much* as I used to do.”

“I don’t think my *mental* confidence is as good as it used to be. I find my memory’s not as good as it used to be. So, that sort of bothers me, but uh, I guess a lot of people get that way when they get older.”

Autonomy

In general, Rae feels very much in control of her decisions and behaviours. One area, however, where she does not feel adequately in charge of her decisions is in her financial situation. Though her husband is not a controlling individual and always discusses any decisions that need to be made with respect to monetary matters, she is concerned that having handed over all of the financial responsibility to him years ago (which was happy to do back then) may have been a mistake, as she is now regretful that she had not been more involved in this aspect of the home life because she would not feel competent in her ability to manage the finances if he were to pass away. She is happy, however, that she has her own bank account and manages the allowances that she receives from the government.

“Well, *one* thing that I find is –*men* –well, I don’t know, some men –‘cause some women do all the –the money part of the house and –and looking after paying the bills and that –but my husband’s been *wonderful* –has always done that. He’s like a book keeper and he does it like book keeping –in a book, so I *let* him do it! But now, as I’m getting *older* ... I worry about that, because I think: “when he’s gone, will I be able to manage all that’s to do with the money matters in the house?” You start *thinking* about those things when you haven’t *done* it and I think *every* woman should know how to manage their money and house –which I *didn’t* do.

“No, I *don’t* [feel in charge of my finances] and that *bothers* me (laughs)”

“My husband isn’t controlling. [He] *does* make *some* decisions, but uh... we –we always *talk* to each other about it ... he doesn’t make decisions about... money matters or anything like that without talking to me about it (clears throat) ... um... I wish I knew *more* about money matters –*that* bothers me –that I don’t –I haven’t... it’s partly my own fault... it’s *easier* for someone else to do it (chuckles).

“My husband uh, always did the money matters because he –he didn’t *get* a pension from where he worked, so he uh, he managed –like, the savings and that he would invest... and do all that part of it. I *let* him do that. I thought he was better qualified, but ... *really* women should learn how to do that as well... and that, that *is* a mistake... I made, so... it bothers me *now* that I didn’t learn all about... managing money and all that part of it. I –I do I have my own bank account and I *do*... my uh, money for ... uh, what’s it called? ... um, *Senior’s* – what you get from the government. I manage *that* and uh, I get *my* allowance and he gets *his* allowance (chuckles).”

Relatedness

Though she feels meaningfully connected to her family members, she feels lonely at times because the meaningful connections she has with her friends are dwindling as they pass away over time and she feels that new friendships of the same calibre are more difficult to develop in advanced age.

“I have *friends*, but I haven’t got as many friends as I used to have (chuckles)... they keep *dying* on me! (laughs) I find *that* hard –losing friends... and you don’t have -really have any control over *that*! It makes me feel... lonely at times, that these friends are gone... as you get older, you don’t acquire the same friendships... as you do when you’re younger. At a certain stage of life, I think uh, you don’t look forward to going maybe into a senior’s residence or something like that”

In Exercise

Competence

As an exerciser, Rae feels confident in her ability to be successful in her exercise behaviour and overcome difficulties associated with exercise because she listens to her body and does what she knows she can do. This was not the case when she first started exercising because was not sure what to expect from the program or how her injuries would impact her performance. That feeling of caution went away for her over time, however, as she started to feel better mentally and physically.

“Oh! Fine... because I *do* do what my body... tells me to do in the –and like, if I can’t do something I *just* don’t *do* it but I do what I *can* do.

“I think when I first started exercising I was a lot more *cautious*, but um... I found that it did -made me feel *a lot* better... so... and... the class that I took was not ... a difficult class anyway, it was for people that had ... joint problems, or whatever, Aqua Fit in Moderation.”

“I was gonna say, if you’re feeling better physically, you’re definitely feeling better mentally, I think... yeah! It gives you *confidence*... you know, if you can do something well and uh... if you come and your joints are all hurting and uh... after you’ve come to the Y for a while and do –do the classes um, you find that you can *move* better, you know... and you can get *around* better and *do* things that maybe you hadn’t been able to do for a while.

Though she started out in a class that was low intensity and has worked her way up to the regular Aqua Fit class, she does not feel that a higher intensity class would be appropriate for her at her age. She believes that one *could* just go at their own pace in a more intense class, but that there would be a higher risk of injury and thus would be more intimidating for her now, despite her successes.

“Uh...well, it would *now* (laughs) that my *age* category, because it –it’s a lot uh ... more difficult *moving* program, so... I don’t think it would be suited to ... me now.”

“Well, you *can* [go at your own pace] if you choose to... but, um, I’d rather be in that other class which is doing... getting a *benefit* from it... doing the exercise program. You don’t want something that’s gonna -going to make your joints *worse*.”

Autonomy

With respect to her decision to exercise, Rae has always felt that she is in charge and that there is no one dictating to her, though her husband will send prompts at times when she is considering taking the day off. Regarding the types of exercise she engages in, she feels very much in charge and is tolerant of the fact that she may not be able to do some of the specific exercises that the leader is presenting. While there are a variety of classes and exercise equipment available at the YMCA, Rae does not feel that this influences her sense of autonomy, as she is only interested in the one specific class that she does attend.

“I *am* in charge... it’s up to *me* (chuckles) -to do it! (laughs) Sometimes if I –as I said, if I decide I might lay *low* one day, my husband will say: “aren’t you going to the Y today?” so, he’s an *influence* on me and if maybe one day when the weather’s not good or I’m not feeling a hundred percent or something then... he’ll say: “aren’t you going to the Y today?” (chuckles) Sometimes he influences – influences me in thinking – I get the guilt feeling that I *must* go (laughs)”

“If you don’t –if you *can’t* do something, then you don’t try to do it to try to prove something, ‘cause that’s not going to help your body at *all*.”

Rae recognizes that the nature of an exercise ‘class’ means that there is a leader who guides the class by making decisions over what exercises are to be done and when, but that does not affect her negatively because that leader is more knowledgeable and will help her achieve her goals. At the same time she does not hand over all control to the leader, as she does not feel obligated to follow the leader’s instruction if she is not feeling up to it.

“Well, just -if somebody’s teaching our class, I guess they’re in *control* of it -so it doesn’t bother me a bit! (laughs) Because that’s what they’re there for! They have instruct us what to do... for our *bodies* to make them *better*. If I feel I’m not *able* to do it, I just don’t *do* whatever certain thing is that I think might, uh, *not* be for *me*. I know when something would be *hurting*, so I wouldn’t *do* that. I just go at my own pace –I think that’s what you have to do... everybody has their own... *pace* that they uh, can exercise at.”

Relatedness

While Rae does not feel particularly related to her exercise instructor or staff members at the YMCA, she has a very strong sense of meaningful connection and belonging with the Cafeteria Club. This is not surprising given the inner community they have established for themselves within the greater YMCA community and the number of years that she has been present. She believes that her sense of meaningful connection to the group was similar back when she first started exercising, but that she had a lot more friends back then. Much like how Rae has experienced the loss of friends in her life in general, she has also been disappointed by the absence of friends from her Aqua Fit class, whether by death or illness. It was particularly difficult for her to experience the passing of one classmate whom she travelled with and regarded as a role model.

“I have visited a lady that used to come to our Aqua class and who was 90 years old and uh, I missed her a lot, ‘cause I used to bring her into the Y and um... yeah... we all missed her. I missed terribly, mhmhm. She was such a –she was *always... positive* and... looking outwards, you know? Yeah... [Rae becomes a bit emotional, with tears welling up in her eyes] everybody thought she was just a great person, you know, and she was -never *down*. She was always so *outward* looking and ... never complained! She was an influence on you... thinking, “Well, don’t worry about your little problems!” (laughs)

“*Well*, you just *do* (chuckles) [get through it emotionally] because we all gotta go sometime... and if somebody’s in uh... having a lot of *pain*, or something, you don’t wish them to be here longer, you know? But uh... we seem to manage and *try* and keep in touch –you *do* lose touch with people once they stop coming to the class though, um... one reason or another... you just looked forward to seeing them when they came to the class all the time and they may be going somewhere else, or they’re unable, they’ve moved, or died, or -or whatever.”

Though it is not a frequent occurrence for classmates to pass away, it is more common for people to take time off due to injury or illness. What is unique about Rae’s social circle at the YMCA compared to the other participants is that when someone is not able to participate in the class, they often times still show up to the building to spend time with the Cafeteria Club before and after class time. In fact Rae had done that very thing on the day of her interview and the week leading up to it because she had had surgery on her ear and was encouraged to stay out of the pool until it had healed.

“People uh, have fallen by the wayside now, that are unable to come for health reasons... and you miss that. You miss them. But we sort of try and get together periodically, even if they’re not coming to the class”

“They just came because they’re not able to... go in the water right now, but they still *belong*! They still belong ... to the Y. They come just to get together. It’s the nice social part of it. I think some of them uh, don’t go out in the winter time because of the weather outside -weather related...”

Need Value

In Relation To Herself as a Person

In relation to herself as a person, Rae felt that autonomy was the most important of the three psychological needs in that the power to be in charge of her own decisions and behaviours was more important than being confident in her abilities, because she accepts the fact that she cannot be confident in everything. She was more unsure about where to place relatedness in comparison to the others, but after much thought, moved this third need from tertiary importance to secondary, alongside competence, because she likes to have connections with others, but does not have the energy put on social events like she used to in order to maintain some of those friendships and thus it has become less important to her to be socializing as much.

“Well, yes as far as being in control of your decisions and behaviours that would be number 1, ‘cause I don’t want ... *strangers* making decisions for me, unless I *have* to! (laughs) I think *everyone* should be in charge of –being in control of your own decisions and not be influenced by others. There would be a lot more kids... not get -not getting in trouble if they were in control of their decisions (chuckles) ...”

“Well, I have friends outside of the *Y*, so –and they’re important ... to me, uh... but they’re getting fewer of them (chuckles) –no, I like to have connection with others. It’s just that I -I used to entertain a lot and I *don’t*... entertain a lot – because of health reasons, like -I just don’t have the *energy*. You have to give *something* up! (laughs) But *not* the *Y*!”

In The Eyes of Society

In thinking about how society would place the three needs in order of importance, Rae believed that society would place competence equally with autonomy in the position of primary importance and that relatedness would remain as a secondarily important need. There was some confusion with this question for Rae, as there was with several other participants in that she responded with answers about how satisfied she thought these needs were (“I think they have confidence in their abilities”) instead of the *value* placed on the needs.

“I think, they’d be pretty well the same. Everybody should be in control of your *own* –*personal* decisions... yeah, we’re responsible for *ourselves* ... *what* we do... but ... meaningful connections to others ... I don’t know whether that’s... important to people –young people or not ... and I think they have confidence in their abilities –young people (says with a laugh).”

As an Exerciser

As an exerciser, Rae decided that all three needs were equally important to her in the end, once again debating about the importance of relatedness. Autonomy was

particularly important once again, as she felt it is important to have ownership over one's self and one's health. Competence, though she speculated that many initiates would be lacking in it, she felt was very important to exercisers—including herself. Finally, relatedness is important to Rae as an exerciser because the social bonds she has created through exercise have made her happier in general.

“Well, I think it applies -being in control of your decisions and behaviours as far as, it's only *you* can, uh, that can *do* the exercise and you have to ... uh, be in *control* of... -it's *your* body and you have to look after it. Nobody else is going to... look after it for you, unless—if you don't cooperate... and... and um, *some* people wouldn't feel that way [referring to competence], I guess, if they were coming here for a program... *confident* ... when they first come.”

As an Initiate

When thinking about the value she would have placed on the three needs as an initiate, Rae felt that competence and relatedness were less important to her as an exerciser than they are now because her main concern was improving her health, and thus even though she did not feel that her competence and relatedness needs were highly satisfied in the context of exercise, it was not of primary importance for her to fulfill them at that time, because she did not have high expectations of the effectiveness of the program going into it.

“I really didn't have a connection to others until *after* I'd been coming... to the Y for a while. So... that wasn't important at that stage of the game—when I first came. I came *mainly* because of my health and I didn't know whether it was going to help me or not. I didn't really *know* what—whether it was going to benefit me or not”

Connecting the Needs to Motivation

Rae felt that there was a connection between the three needs and her motivation, particularly with autonomy, in that a primary reason for attending the exercise class is to be in charge of her health. Over time she has developed greater confidence in her ability to exercise and in the program's ability to help her and that is a motivating factor for her. Finally, as stated previously, Rae feels that relatedness is a source of motivation, but that it is a supplemental form of motivation or incentive.

“Yeah... I think they influence motivation, because... you—you come partly for your *body*... and it's *your* body and you have to make the decision... to help it. I feel confident that coming here *helps* me, so you have confidence in what you're doing ... and uh, meaningful connections is *very* important—I should've had that up *there*, really. Very important. Yeah ... but uh... it's ... it's an *incentive* to come ... a -another incentive to come—not just for your body, it's for your *friends*”

Well-Being and Exercise

In general, Rae describes here mental well-being as “Good!” at this point in her life and better than when she first started exercising, because she was still experiencing bouts of depression. During exercise, she feels that her mental well-being is “good” and better than when she is not exercising, because it distracts her from her minor day to day problems. Though the exercise always made her feel better afterwards, she was much more cautious during her exercise classes as an initiate, because the program had to “prove itself” and because “things *hurt*” during the actual class due to her physical condition. She refrained from pushing herself too hard though, and over time came to experience the benefits that exercise has to offer and now it is always a pleasant experience for her.

“I used to have periods of depression ... and I –it might have been because of my... joint problems and –and uh... gen -my general health then wasn’t as good.

“When I first started I didn’t really know anyone, I didn’t know whether this program was going to help me or not... ‘cause I’d been to *umpteen* doctors with my *back* and my *joints* ... and uh ... so, it had to prove itself, I guess and I continued on ... so... I *think* [it made me feel better afterwards]... it’s hard to remember that far back (laughs). Um... ya, I think I feel better, or I wouldn’t have kept coming.”

Need Thwarting

Competence

When having a good day mentally, it does not matter to Rae if her technical performance is not as good as usual because she has come to accept that some days will be better than others.

“*No*... that doesn’t bother me. No. Well, I’ve been coming here so long that I know *some* days you’re not going to feel as good as others... and uh, you just accept that.

Though she was not confident in her ability to recall how she would have felt as an initiate, Rae speculated that she would not have been able to brush it off that easily, because she would have been wanting to see gains faster.

“I don’t think so. It was so long ago, I can’t remember, but I don’t think so... I was thinking: “Why isn’t this getting better faster?” (laughs)”

Autonomy

Similarly, when having a good day mentally, Rae would not feel upset if her exercise leader became more controlling or demanding because it is not a one-on-one training situation, thus she has the freedom to modify her exercise as she sees fit because

it is not being directed to her personally. She feels that this same mentality would have been upheld during her initiate experience.

“It wouldn’t bother me, *really*. No. You know, tomorrow –tomorrow you might be *better* (chuckles) –you might feel better (chuckles). You gotta look on the positive side, not the negative side. There’s nothing -I don’t think there’s anything really *personal* related ... in those classes... you do what you’re *able* to do and the best you can do and they don’t seem to expect any more than that. You’re not doing it on an individual basis. If you can’t doing something, you just don’t do it, that’s all. Your body says no.”

“Well, I think I always did *just* what I could *do* ... and didn’t worry about –if I couldn’t do something, well then I didn’t *do* it, that’s all. There’s no point in punishing your body... ‘cause you’re not able to *do* something. Or, you know... had to do something that’s going to make your ... *worse* when you came out, than better (chuckles).”

Relatedness

With respect to relatedness, Rae felt that even though her friends are very important to her, it would not upset her if on a good day she did not experience those meaningful connections she has become accustomed to experiencing because she comes mainly for herself and those connections are a bonus for her. Likewise, she would not have been disappointed as an initiate either, because she had not yet developed those meaningful connections.

“[It] doesn’t bother me (chuckles) I come for *me*, really.”

Last Class

Before Class

Because of her surgery, Rae had been off exercise for one week and thus had to reflect on the last time she had exercised. According to Rae, before coming into the YMCA that day she felt “capable!” and “in charge”, as always, and satisfied with her meaningful connections.

During Class

Rae claims that she does not think much about how she is feeling during the actual class, because she is simply focusing on the exercise at hand and enjoying the experience, but she suspects that she would have been feeling “good”: connected to others, in charge, and generally more capable than before the class had started, though she was not sure why.

“I don’t think too much while I’m exercising (laughs). I just enjoy the moment”

“I don’t *know*, just... water does that to me! (laughs) I *enjoy* it. I find it helpful.”

“Oh great! I’m in charge of **me**. (chuckles). Uh, in some respects, I guess [I feel more in charge in the pool]. Ya. Uh... well... uh... it’s up to you, how much exercise you want to do... and uh, if it’s making you feel better... you want to do everything you *can* in the class... and it’s only *you* that can do *that*... *whatever* they’re doing, if you’re unable to do it, you *don’t* do it tr -trying to prove something – if it’s going to make you feel *worse*.”

“Oh, I’m *always* connected to others... frien –people in the class and there’s... I’m one of those people when there’s somebody new come into the class... I used to always try and... speak to them... encourage them to come back. I try and remember their names, but I’m not very good at that (laughs) and uh.... But uh, when new people came, I always liked to talk to them and see how they’re enjoying the class and that sort of thing. I don’t think [there were new people that day]... *well*, there *are* people come –that only come once and then you never see them again, so you don’t know ... you know... whether they’re interested in joining your class or if they’re just coming to see what it’s *like*, or ... I think they’ve had a few of those this uh... year, I think they did give out some gift certificates trial passes. mhmmm.”